

THE OPERATION OF SALVATION IN PARISH
AND PERSON: SOTERIOLOGICAL PRAXIS
IN SACRAMENTAL CONTEXT

by
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This professional project, completed by

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THE OPERATION OF SALVATION IN PARISH AND PERSON:
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By Gary Jay Adams

ABSTRACT

This is a professional project addressing the problem of the need for continuing reflective and constructive theologizing by those engaged in pastoral ministries, in their efforts to discern and communicate salvific experience in the appropriate functions of parish ministry.

The project maintains the thesis that those engaged in pastoral ministries should consciously seek to become 'generalists' of such caliber that all of the 'specialties' whose tools they use in their appropriate functions may be effectively integrated in the single pursuit of 'wholeness' and 'completion' for those whom they serve, themselves, human community generally, and all of existent reality. The project illustrates such a possibility through one method of organization, concentration and synthesis: the effort to see sacramental system as arising from and contributing to the process of human growth in community.

The project illustrates a method for integrating the findings of human sciences with those of sacramental

theology, specifically by developing a soteriological theology of pastoral praxis which takes into account the developmental emergence of human personality in relational and social context. An effort is made to erase the traditional barriers between 'classical' (reflective and constructive) theology and 'practical' (applied) theology, by including actual experience in the functions of ministerial operation on an equal footing with acquired theoretical knowledge in a variety of fields. The product is intended to be an example of 'revisionist theology' which results from the interface of three, rather than two, sources of data.

The first of four chapters begins with an autobiographical demonstration of the need for, and difficulty in achieving, a definition of pastoral praxis. The definition which is offered as the product of experience and reflection, is presented in deliberate contradistinction to the method of definition by the aggregation of specializations in the service of the application of theory. Specifically, it is described organically in such manner that theological reflection and construction are seen to arise as the field in which ministerial operation occurs. The various facets of operation are described in terms of their interrelationships with each other in a single soteriological aim, the pursuit of which produces the

human experience which is the primary content of the reflective-constructive enterprise.

The various facets of pastoral operation having been described as sharing a soteriological intention and effect, the second chapter examines the issue of an operational 'Christology from below' in the light both of certain recent examples of constructive theology and of certain findings in the human sciences, especially those which view human personality organically and developmentally.

The connection having been made, and a foundation of presuppositions laid, the third chapter examines the process of human growth as the arena of soteriological operation.

In the final chapter, the organic operation of the sacramental system is revealed as the appropriate context of all the facets of ministerial operation and pastoral praxis, based upon its connection with the emergence of the distinctively 'human' in the process of growth in relationship and community.

INTRODUCTION

CAVEAT

In the long and short run both, the purpose of this project is to prove that the life, work and thought of one practitioner of parish ministry is worth the candle. To that end, I have edited and re-written nearly every paragraph you will read. But you will not, as a matter of fact, be reading those edited and re-written paragraphs. They do not, I think, do the job they were intended to accomplish. Therefore, I have re-edited with the intention of removing as much editorial work as I could reasonably do. Consequently, what you will be seeing is more nearly a reflection of a life-in-process than it is a 'finished product' by any standard. To the extent that I realize myself as unfinished, I am unable to present this particular project as 'finished.' The 'life, work, and thought,' which I wish to suppose have value, are all of them quite unfinished. At the moment I write this, in fact, I really want to say that they are altogether 'undone.'

Let me explain, as succinctly as possible, what my life and work are like right now. Such a description should, I think, register as well much of my current thought. At this very moment, I am five hundred miles from home wondering and worrying about what is happening in the lives of my wife and my two youngest children. There are, at the

same time, a number of other things about which I need not wonder, or only wonder a little, though they are certainly occasions of considerable worry. Just to list them is an occasion of worry. Do I have any realistic notion of their priority? Do I understand, even a little, their relationship one with another? Where and when and how can I be responsible in terms of my actions and reactions? Here they are: A few days ago, my mother suffered a moderately heavy stroke; my father is fearly and confused; my younger brother, who has been in recent years a model for me of stability, told me yesterday of his decision to enter an alcoholic rehabilitation program; my daughter, who is pregnant, leaves with her husband and two-year old son to move to a distant city where her husband will attend Seminary; he, in the meantime, has finally learned, after more than a year of wondering, that he suffers from an irreversible osteo-neuropathic disease which will one day prove fatal. I am on what is laughingly called a 'sabbatical,' during which time I am considering and being considered by those who may issue a call to a new parish; while I am objectively aware that the ministry I have been engaged upon has reached a moment of real conclusion, I am also aware that my fourteen-year old son, who is hyper-kinetic, has recently acquired the only real peer-level friend he has ever had. That is, I think, succinct. It may leave its readers as confused as

its author. What, I ask myself, should I do; and where, in my doing, should I begin?

I will begin with the re-examination of my hard-won self-understanding of myself as person-in-relationship. I will consider the meaning of those relationships - all of them, those listed and so many others - which define my life-in-process. I will look at what I have to give, at the strengths I have to offer, and I will be quite as thorough in examining the needs I have in my life. I will consider the contents of both lists as inventories of opportunities as well as of responsibilities: opportunities to choose from an infinite variety of possible futures; responsibilities to receive and confer care. Some might call this much of the process "prayer," and they would be right.

Whatever I will be doing during a moment of 'crisis' in my life will be done in the same content as all the preceding activities of my family and work lives. I will be becoming 'son' and 'father' and 'husband,' 'lover' and 'teacher' and 'mentor,' 'priest' and 'brother' and 'friend.' 'Church' will be more than 'part of my life;' it will be the edge where my life becomes. It will be, and it always is at its best, the opportunity for the best possible, most 'satisfactory,' possibilities for me and for those whose lives, however closely or distantly, mesh with mine. Salvation will be going on in

the welter of events that surround me, because there will be conversation in which the Christ is present and participant.

I am, right now, re-involved in the Paschal mystery. Passion, death and resurrection are not simply events that I notice, they are my life, as my life-in-relationship is. My baptism, and Christ's universal baptism of all creation, were never more real to me than they are just now. I am now simply a dispenser of, or presider at, the Sacraments; I am part of the Sacrament - and so is all else. All around me I am hearing confessions - and being absolved. I stretch out my hand with unction - and other hands stretch out to me. In whatever feeding I can do, I am fed - O, God, I am fed!

You are warned that what you read fits what happens in this one life-in-relationship. Also be warned that it was once said by a perceptive critic that my prose style is "almost perfectly opaque." You will understand why I never preach from manuscript, while you debate whether my critic was not perhaps charitable to excess.

APOLOGIA

Of course it is all very well to warn the potential readers, but a reasonable respect for decency in these matters demands as well some effort to provide at least a preliminary understanding of both the method utilized and the terms employed, as well as some justification for the otherwise only presumed importance of this or a similar project.

Many of us engaged in parish practice come to our work with the understanding that what we have to do is to apply in specific situations the theological 'answers' acquired in theological education. The means of application are a variety of methodologies borrowed from developing secular disciplines. While the 'answers' and the methods may be based upon fundamentally different presuppositions, the conflicts implicit in such a situation seldom become clear until we have reflected critically upon the experiences accumulated in the course of ministry. Too often, the result of reflection is the decision to gain further expertise in one or another of the methodologies borrowed, reserving the questions of conflict and integration for another day. This leads to a concentration on technique and specialization at the expense of understanding and discernment. Parish practitioners add to their portfolios one set of specialties upon another, without adequate attention to the expanding context in which they

are utilized. Theological understandings which cannot be accommodated to the acquired techniques are eventually excluded from the areas of application, and find expression, if at all, from the pulpit, or in some education programs. Many practitioners are less inclined to criticize and amend their theologies than they are to ignore them where they prove inconvenient or seem irrelevant.

A theology which 'works' as well in a counseling situation as it does from the pulpit, that is as illuminating in the working through of one's own marital or parental relationships, as it is in an adult education class, is a crying need for most parish practitioners. There needs to be a personal re-examination of the generally accepted functions of ministerial operation, with the motive of setting all of these in a single relational context. The importance of the project lies not in performing such a re-examination for others, but in the demonstration of the possibility of such an exercise by a parish practitioner.

Ministerial operation has to do, first of all, with the relationships of human persons. Consequently, some understanding of 'human' 'person' and 'relationship,' is a requirement for an examination of the functions of that operation. To say this is not to deny by omission, a dimension of transcendence in ministerial operation. However, one does begin with the presupposition that

transcendence is available for reflection in the experience of self-transcendence which is definitive of the process of becoming a human person. This means that there is a fundamental importance in the need to integrate an understanding of the becoming of the human person with efforts to cope with questions regarding the value of existence and the meaning towards which all becoming proceeds.

It is vital to see the operation of sacraments, and of sacramental system, as belonging intrinsically to the process of human growth in community. Certainly, an importance of this project - if at all successful - would be the demonstration of such a possibility out of the immediate and continuing use of the system, rather than out of speculative considerations, however inspired.

I am not aware of any published work which explicitly attempts a project such as this one. In effect, what I attempt to do is engage in synthetic, constructive theologizing from an empirical base, utilizing my own experience in ministerial operation as the primary data for the enterprise. In this effort I am especially instructed by the methods of American empirical theologians, especially those of the Chicago School, and of their philosophical forebearers, especially the radical empiricism of Dewey, and to a lesser extent, the philosophy of process of Whitehead. I am further stimulated by those persons whom David Tracy has denominated "revisionist" theologians.

A try to bring to bear the insights into the development of the human personality of Sullivan and Erickson. I further have reference to the emergence of both Field Theory and Systems Theory in my effort to understand persons-in-community. I attempt to integrate with the material the most recent work in Christology of persons like Pannenberg, Moltmann, Kasper, Schillebeeckx, Rahner, and Kling. There is some indebtedness, both as to content and method, to such widely divergent figures as Bernard Lonergan, Gregory Bateson and Paul Ricoeur.

In summary, this projects deals with the practice and critical re-formation of pastoral ministry within the context of sacramental system. My method is deliverately syntehtic and integrative in my effort to support the contention that the central issue of ministerial operation is soteriological: people need to grow towards wholeness. Method is reflected in material when "person" is defined in terms of relationship and community, always relying on deliberately selected authorities. I make no effort towards any exhaustive treatment of the wide range of theories on the nature of persons. While "sacramental system" is central to the development of the argument, any treatment of the history of sacramental doctrine is necessarily excluded. Excluded as well is any attempt to make specific Biblical references. Instead, I rely on a presumed coincidence with certain major New Testament themes.

Since much of the project has to do with the search for emerging definitions, it is only fair, I think, that I offer at the outset some tentative and rather undeveloped definitions to provide a sort of lexicographical anchor to windward.

Communication; Conversation; Relationship.

The dynamic exchange of symbols, which is constitutive of both human persons and human community; the primary means of human growth and development.

Community.

The relationship of persons constituted by symbol-exchange within a system characterized by spatio-temporal continuity; a system of persons; the context of human growth and development.

Functions (of Ministry).

The constituent facets (acts, behaviors, performances, affects) of ministerial operation.

Ministerial Operation

Those acts which are constitutive of human community and contributory to the development of human personality, or reparative thereto; that which contributes to human health or wholeness. In the project, special reference is had to such behaviors by and within the parish or congregation, and more particularly as they are engaged in by those ordained

to exercise such responsibilities on behalf of the community. The adjective 'pastoral' is used to refer both to individual functions and to the totality of operation.

Parish; Congregation.

Community constituted by sacramento.

Praxis; Practice.

These terms are not used as precise equivalents. Practice refers to the employment of any functions of ministry. Praxis is practice plus the critical correction and revision that arises from the reflection which can be both coincident and subsequent thereto.

Sacrament.

A symbol which communicates the contemporary presence of its referant. In Christian community, the referant of a sacrament is Jesus the Christ.

System.

The dynamic inter-relationship of entities, together with the spatio-temporal field constituted by the inter-play of relationships.

Chapter I

DEFINING PASTORAL PRAXIS

THE BEGINNINGS OF THEOLOGIZING

The story I need to tell begins right now, with the setting of these words on paper; it runs both ways, into a past which extends beyond my recollection and into a future beyond my imagination. It is the story of the becoming of a pastor. Its most important specifics, reduced to schematics, are shared with the similar stories of countless others. I am at least ordinarily intelligent; had a reasonably decent infancy, childhood and adolescence, in an intact family; obtained an adequate, if fairly commonplace education; have been the marital partner of the same person for thirty years, with whom was shared (though hardly equally) the parenting of five children; engaged, not very profitably, in a profit-making enterprise; both worked and played at politics, proceeded from a rather inchoate sense of 'vocation,' through seminary, to ordination and subsequent employment in a variety of 'pastoral' positions in the Church.

This catalogue, of course, does not even begin to describe the process of formation which may eventuate in the emergence of a 'pastor.' It does, however, begin to list in outline the irreducible minimum of human qualities and experience which are pre-requisites to that process. If one is to become a pastor, there must be given, along with the desire to do so, at least enough intelligence to be formed

reasonably successful progress into adulthood, time for experience in the modes of social inter-action available, a fair amount of effective education, and the opportunity to engage in the activity of 'pastoring.' All of us, I think who are becoming pastors share these qualities and experiences in one form or another. Now, I want to examine some of the other things we may share, or come to share, as the process develops.

As ill-defined or specific as the original sense of vocation may be, it is, I feel certain, the beginning of theologizing. One simply does not get started in the process of becoming a pastor without first becoming a theologian. All these years later, I am not nearly good enough a theologian to understand, much less explain, my 'vocation.' I feel it quite an accomplishment, in fact, to be able at last to accept it, however, much 'struggling against the traces' I do in the process. Short of a certifiable sainthood, a person simply does not desire to be a pastor with much more fervor than he/she resents the necessity. Insofar, in this sort of struggle between desire and resentment, God wins and I lose, I have begun to be a theologian. People who win the contest may speak of "God" with enormous erudition, but they have hardly known Him. Theology, I think, has to do with the knowledge of God, first, and then perhaps with its study and description, though many of us may have begun the study of this knowledge long before we admit to

to being possessed by it.¹

I, for one, had barely begun this sort of theologizing before the next stages of my quite necessary education convinced me that I had no business doing it. Theology, I learned, is an arcane discipline appropriately engaged in by specialists. The application of the results of their endeavors - 'practical theology' - I might one day be qualified to practice.² Qualification, of course, would depend upon the prior acquisition of two sets of skills. First, I must become sufficiently well acquainted with one or more 'systems' of theology so that I could manipulate their various parts with ease; second, new means, or tools, of application would need to be acquired, or old ones retro-fitted to new uses. Management skills, for instance, gained through experience in the business world, were transferrable to the issues of parish management. Or communication skills, sharpened in political address and debate, could be employed

¹With this statement, I perhaps reveal a strain of influence in my thinking that is more than merely residually Barthian. See Karl Barth, The Knowledge of God and the Service of God According to the Teaching of the Reformation (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1938) and Karl Barth, Evangelical Theology: An Introduction (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1963). This particular strain could easily enough be traced, of course, back through Calvin and Augustine to Paul.

²Even such a leading exponent of 'practical theology' as a discipline with some claim to parity with the more 'academic' branches as Sewart Hiltner generally maintains a description based on application pretty exclusively. See Seward Hiltner, Preface to Practical Theology (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1958).

in the proclamatory and hortatory exercises of homiletics. Where formal skills were missing altogether, such as educational method for catechesis, or therapeutic method for counseling and spiritual guidance, they must be added from whatever storehouse in which they could be found. Clearly, the second set of skills, those required for application, would come largely from the accumulation of a secular tradition dominated by a variety of empiricism and positivisms. It was a very long time before it became clear to me that I could not pick up any of the sharper tools of application without also bringing with them into my world the philosophical pre-suppositions on which their development had been based.³

INTEGRATION AND REVISION

Retrospectively, I am able to discern that I did not actually cease theologizing simply because I had learned I was unqualified to do it. In the beginning, however, I would not have had the temerity to use the label. I told myself I was 'thinking about,' or 'reflecting,' or 'meditating,'

³This problem, of course, is not limited to the area of practical application in parish practice. The effort to maintain the integrity of theology as a 'science' on a par with other sciences within the academic community, is in part caused by, and in part leads to, a continuing debate about fundamental pre-suppositions. On this subject, see Wolfhart Pannenberg, Theology and the Philosophy of Science (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1976). This work is a masterful historical synthesis of some of the issues in the debate, though it remain quite European-Provincial in its outlook.

because I could view these processes as passive. They could hardly be seen as anything so active as 'constructive theology.' After all, was it not true that the insights acquired in contemplating my own experience in 'applying' theology were only ways of making explicit some fragment of a valid, pre-existent, theological 'system?' It was a long while before it dawned on me that what I was doing, in fact, was revising the system in the light of my experience. If this was not 'constructive theology,' it was, at the very least, re-constructive. As time passed, more and more pastoral experience led to more and more reflection. The system with which I had begun seemed no longer large enough or supple enough to contain the multitude of 'revisions.' Since my experience was by no means unique, it is hardly surprising that the years during which I was making my discoveries also produced an utter plethora of 'theologies of' this, that and the other. It seemed that no one's system was able to accommodate the wealth of new experiential data.⁴

It was simply no longer adequate to modify an exist-

⁴A specific instance of the sort of grasping and grappling of which I speak would be the effort to expand Barthian theology into the areas of concern for 'liberation' especially growing out of practice in third-world countries. Miguez Bonino's work is the case I have particularly in mind. The introduction of the careful use of Marxian analysis, and of the critical methodology it required, brought more into the system's outline than it could comfortably contain. The result has been the emergency of something genuinely new. See Jose Miguez Bonino, Doing Theology in a Revolutionary Situation (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975)

ing 'system' according to certain irreducible denominational requirements. My own efforts to graft an Anglicanized ecclesiology and sacramental theology onto a basically Barthian framework had been more than adequate to earn 'honors' in seminary and to answer the questions of pre-ordination examinations, but they were an abject failure in the parish. Because the various components of such a 'system' were roughly rationally consistent, they could be taught fairly well, at least at the theoretical level. But, in my experience at least, they would not preach at all well. I caught myself sounding more and more like a Tillichian in the pulpit. Since I had not yet had the advantage of reading Thomas Oden's Kerygma and Counseling, I was unable to make much use of Barth in counseling situations, either.⁵ Indeed, this is where everything seemed to break down. People were in pain, and sought relief. People felt helpless, and were looking for the power to move or grow or change. I could talk to them about the alleviation of pain and the source of power, on the basis of my ready-made theological understandings. That part was easy enough, but the delivery of relief was beyond the capacity of the system as I had internalized it. Sometimes it became apparent that my feelings of pain and powerlessness at my inability to help,

⁵Thomas C. Oden, Kerygma and Counseling (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1966)

and the silent attention to those who spoke to me, which it produced, did have a therapeutic effect of its own. I could not define precisely what was happening, but the dynamic reminded me of some half-forgotten assigned readings in Rogers.⁶ I assigned myself some more reading, and became, for the purposes of counseling, a Rogerian. Now, make that co-exist with Barth, if you will! The inconsistencies between how I preached and how I taught could be covered up pretty well, but this new inconsistency was simply too much for my own conscience and sense of honesty to accommodate.

A first inclination was to quit concerning myself with theology and get on with the activity of ministry. This inclination might well have led me, as it led many of my associates of that period, to become a more or less qualified 'counselor,' dedicated to the alleviation of human suffering to whatever degree my skills and temperament might permit. An awareness of the contribution to that suffering of ailments in the systems of social interaction, of the Church's own participation in the production of guilt and fear and anger, led me to consider at least briefly, the advisability of excluding myself from that system as nearly as might be for the purpose of bringing relief to its victims.

⁶ e.g., Carl R. Rogers, Counselling and Psychotherapy (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1942); Carl R. Rogers, Client Centered Therapy (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1951); Carl R. Rogers, Psychotherapy and Personality (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1954)

This was a soon discarded notion on the twin pragmatic grounds that, first, such exclusion was, in fact, impossible, and, second, that no considerable relief would be possible for anyone until the systemic ailments were also therapeutically addressed. It may seem, indeed it sometimes seems to me, that I might well and better have come to my decision on the basis of sound theological considerations. The difficulty at that moment was the the problems I had been experiencing with the whole theological enterprise, together with my still current impression that I was not qualified to theologize in any event, invalidated for me the use of theological method and categories for the purpose of decision making. There was the fact, too, that while I knew quite a lot about a variety of theologies, I knew almost nothing of theological method as such. Lonergan was very likely writing his book on the subject at the very time I was engaged in trusting my experience and 'instinct' to ground my pragmatic decision.⁷ It was clear to me that I needed 'pastoring,' the people around me needed it, and so did the institutions of society, most specifically including the family and the Church. Therefore, I decided, after some years in the professional ministry, to become a pastor. I have been becoming one ever since.

⁷ Bernard Lonergan, Method in Theology (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972)

It seemed supra-logically obvious to me that one cannot be a pastor without theology. Nor can one be a good pastor without possessing near professional-level skills in a variety of fields. One would need to be a most expansive sort of generalist if one were to be any good at such a pursuit. This was a vitally important, though somewhat disappointing, insight for me. After all, I lived in a world in which technology and technique ruled supreme. Specialization was the prescribed route to increased productivity. It seemed that becoming a pastor meant becoming a multi-credentialed specialist. To a degree, there is no way around this conclusion. My own subsequent experience has taught me, however, that the accumulation of professional specialties in itself is woefully inadequate to the purpose, especially when theology is viewed as one of those specialties. The model which has emerged for me, and is the basis on which this essay is written, is one in which the various facets of ministerial operation are seen as taking place in a field which is constructive theology.⁸ Constructive theology is necessarily an on-going enterprise for the pastoral practice.

⁸There is a mixture in this conclusion of insights from both field theory and systems theory. Instrumental in the development of my synthesis-in-process were such works as: Kurt Lewin, Field Theory in Social Science (New York: Harper Row, 1951); B. K. Ridley, Time, Space and Things (Hammondsworth, Eng.: Penguin, 1976); Ervin Lazlo, The Systems View of the World (New York: Braziller, 1972); Gregory Bateson, Mind and Nature (New York: Dutton, 1979)

tioner, because the various facets of ministerial operations are organically inter-related in and through the field in which they occur. Every time I exercise a pastoral function, I affect and am affected by the field in which that exercise is performed. An early intimation that something of this sort was going on, and had, in fact, been going on for a very long while, made it clear to me that scrupulosity over my own theological inadequacies was no defense whatever. I was 'doing theology' willy-nilly, and to the extent that my inadequacies were curable, I had better get about the task forthwith.

ORGANIC INTERRELATIONSHIPS

The order of subsequent events was, I think of relative unimportance. It was rather randomly determined by other emerging circumstances and events in the development of one person's life-history. My becoming aware that this was so, was one of the most important insights to which I would come. Whatever importance order might have, it was different from that which I had always been accustomed to accord it. I had been a Newtonian person who now began to see things with Einsteinian or Heisenbergian eyes. It was the inter-relationship of many occurrences or events within a field that was of first importance, rather than the linear or temporal succession of one event to another. Order was most definitely secondary, and many times the apparent per-

ception of it was altogether artificial. The concept of 'consequence' took on a most complex multi-dimensional shape.⁹

This awareness that every circumstance or event has to do, at a variety of levels of intimacy, with every other circumstance or event, was the mental environment in which I began to inventory the resources which I brought to the task I saw was mine.¹⁰ I began to understand that I was rather better equipped than I had thought. My training, my life experience, and my faith, had already come together in such a way as to produce a reasonably competent journeyman in at least some of the functions of ministerial operation. My most effective skills were the communicative ones: I could preach and teach fairly well. I also felt fairly confident in those areas of counseling, such as pre-marital and

⁹That this last statement should echo ideas which Heisenberg sought to express is not particularly surprising. What is, perhaps, surprising is the fact that such a giant in his own field should think it worthwhile to struggle with the problem of communication in non-technical language with such a one as I. See Werner Heisenberg, Across the Frontiers (New York: Harper & Row, 1974)

¹⁰Out of the past I brought some acquaintance with American empirical philosophy, especially Pierce, James and Dewey. Although I had originally read these authors in order better to dispute with their disciples, some of their basic ideas had taken firmer root in my mind than I was aware. Acquaintance with Teilhard de Chardin and Whitehead had also provided glimpses at alternative ways of articulating the reality of the intrinsic relatedness of things which was pressing itself more and more on my consciousness through observation and expanding experience. See the Bibliography for the particular works which influenced the process recorded here.

pre-baptismal conferences, in which the conveying of understandable information was the central issue. Church administration was annoying, but not particularly difficult or oppressive. The public administration of the sacraments was easy and ego-gratifying. 'Youth work' had become an accidental specialty, for reasons I will hereafter attempt to make clear. It seemed reasonable to suppose that those further areas in which I felt less than competent could be added to my list of competencies through further education and experience.

This was the approach I saw and heard being advocated by most proponents of 'continuing education.' It was an approach, however, which by itself was in conflict with the way in which I had begun to see myself and my world. Indeed, the whole notion of 'by itself' no longer made good sense to me. This was because the inter-connectedness of circumstances and events was being forced on my awareness inescapably, through the process of my becoming a specialist in youth work. I did it because I simply had to do it. The circumstances were these: I was serving a large well-to-do suburban parish; both the congregation and the community were well populated with people of high school age; two of my own sons were in and entering adolescence; the sexual revolution, the implications of participation in an unpopular war, the first wave of drug use, and I, all got to town about the same time. For both me and the parish it was a matter of

'fish or cut bait.' In casting about for the equipment to respond to what looked like a general crisis, I discovered two things: Erik Erikson, and the fact that the work of my own adolescence had not been nearly as well or securely completed as I had believed. I immediately and empathetically understood the nature of some of the internal torment of young people, and found ways to respond to it, for the simple, if not very healthy reason, that I was in the same torment myself. Retrospectively, I am able now to see that my 'youth ministry' was as much a matter of their ministering to me as it was me providing something for them. It took time, distance and some professional therapy for this to become clear to me on the intellectual level, but the discovery in terms of human experience was already there. In any event, I will never again be able to engage in any ministerial operation without an awareness of the reciprocity involved. Nor will I be able to do so without being aware that 'human development' is at stake in every such operation.

I am not sure when I first became intellectually conscious that these two awarenesses were, in fact, theological articulations arrived at empirically. By the time I did so, however, my inventory of resources had been substantially expanded, both by reaching into my past to refurbish what was already there, and by adding to it through more experience and more instruction. From a long gone under-

graduate career I pulled some acquaintance with the development of Western philosophical systems and methods, some theoretical and practical knowledge of post-Kantian critical method, at least as applied to literary criticism, and a curiosity and interest in the methods of the sciences generally. From an even further gone pre-adolescence came the memory of a 'conversion experience' that helped me get straight in my mind what both I and others were really looking for as the product of the various facets of ministerial operation. I wanted, and so did they, to be 'saved.' It was infinitely more than a matter of helping or being helped. I was faced with defining just what could possibly be meant by salvation. Of course, I could no longer be anything less than fearfully aware that, like it or not, I was engaged in the enterprise of constructive theology.

Furthermore, as a Christian I could not help but be aware that the theological arena in which I was reflecting, in which I hoped to make some discovery or build some understanding for myself, was that of Christology, and more specifically that 'active' portion of that study traditionally called soteriology. For the Christian, to ask what is meant by salvation is to inquire how the Saviour saves, and therefore who is He? What had begun as a search for myself, for some progress in self-understanding and some modest improvement in professional competence, had become a frankly theological enterprise. And precisely here I found that I had

still further resources. My vocation, as ill-understood as it might be, was in itself a considerable asset, simply in the considering of it.¹¹ To begin with, it was not really my vocation at all. It belonged to the Church, and therefore to the Church's history. I could not possess such a vocation, but merely participate in it. Ministerial operation, as the acting out of vocation, was the Church functioning, and functioning specifically with soteriological aim. Clearly, I needed some sort of framework to hold the fruits of such reflection. I would need to consider the taxonomy of ministerial operation in order to understand as well as might be the scope of what I was seeking. That it all had something, though not everything, to do with salvation I no longer had any doubt.

A TAXONOMY OF MINISTERIAL OPERATIONS

That the process of reaching toward some improved self-understanding also had something to do with salvation was becoming clear to me as well. Through all of this, I discovered myself to be growing and developing, suffering,

¹¹This is where Erik Erikson became immediately important to me. When I began to re-examine the issue of vocation, it was in the context of the ill-completed issue of 'identity.' I was, after all, asking the classical question of adolescence: "Who am I?" 'Identity Crisis' was a very popular term in those turbulent days of the sixties; it was also a reality in my on-going life-experience. I read voraciously, with the urgent motivation of self-definition, everything then in print. That experience is reflected in much of what follows in this essay.

failing, and being restored. In the awareness of development and restoration, especially, I felt that I was experiencing salvation. On the basis of this experience, I decided that my tentative taxonomy would begin with the two primary phyla of ministerial operation being understood as functions of formation, or edification, on the one hand, and reparative functions, or those of reconciliation, on the other. It is quite true, of course, that such a traditional function of ministerial operation as homiletics, for instance, may at one time be intentionally formative and at another deliberately reparative. Even catechetics might be either formative or reformatory, and therefore reparative.¹² Even though for me, at least, it is quite important to be clear as to which is the intention, the inherent difficulty in achieving such clarity means that my taxonomy can have no properly exclusive genera or species. Indeed, I am not at

¹²Chronologically, a consideration of what is really going on in catechetics was possibly the first explicit step I took in this whole process. I was over-seeing curriculum development for a large church school population, and at the same time finding it necessary to re-teach much elementary doctrinal material to those who entered, in early adolescence, my confirmation classes. When my own sons suggested it might have been better and more efficient for them simply to have skipped exposure to church school classes which left them with notions which had to be corrected in my confirmation class, I was hard put to find a convincing response. I am sure my experience is not unique when I say that, over the years, I have spent more classroom time and energy repairing the sad results of bad teaching than I have conveying anything new. The situation has not changed much as time has passed, but my view of the nature of personality, and of reality generally, has made it somewhat easier to live with the frustration.

all sure that the distinction between such traditional functions themselves, i.e., homiletics and catechetics, can always be legitimately maintained. Perhaps the difference between proclamation and teaching is as much dependent upon how each of them is heard as it is upon the intention of the preacher or teacher. And, in any event, is not the most successful preaching, as well as the most effective teaching, that which preaches and teaches Christ, rather than preaching or teaching about Him?

One can see where such reflection leads. The question begins to arise as to both the accuracy and the utility of any taxonomy. The question arises, but there is a pragmatic answer, or even two. First, there is the history of ministerial operation, of the cure of souls, a general history, and perhaps a specialized denominational history, as well. Previous taxonomies have evolved, they are simply there; tradition has given them into my hands, and I must deal with them one way or another.¹³ Second, people are there, the community and its members; vocation has placed me in relationship to them, and those relationships must be expressed, deepened and maintained in a variety of ways. I may add much to that which history has given me, but I may unilaterally subtract anything only at the greatest

¹³ See John T. McNeill, A History of the Cure of Souls (New York: Harper & Row, 1951). This gives an indispensable over-view of the history involved.

peril to the integrity of the relationships. Some sort of taxonomic arrangement of functions of ministerial operation is simply a practical necessity. I am not at all sure I like this particular conclusion from the experience, but the conclusion is as real as the experience, like it or not. If there is to be a community, a parish, certain activity must be present which identifies it to itself. There must be worship and learning; activities which preserve and extend the community must occur; those who are hurt must be strengthened, while all are being sustained; care for the world beyond the community must find effective means of expression. To the extent that any of these activities fail to occur, the gap between expectation and performance is a specific gauge of the community's disease. The first obligation of leadership within the community is the identification of these activities, and the sub-systems which provide them. But even this 'first obligation' is an emergent realization with extensive implications, whether or not they are immediately consciously recognized.

Even before there can be any practical sorting-out of the functions of leadership, there must be the presupposition that there is meaning and purpose inherent both in that which is led and in the leading of it. It is possible, I think, that a linear, hierarchical, view of the nature of reality can support a definition of meaning and purpose confined to institutional (and personal) self-preservation.

In such a view the purpose of the Church is to preserve itself, and the purpose of ministerial operation is to survive, in the sense of succeeding professionally. If one has already arrived, however, at the conflicting view of reality described in previous paragraphs, such a set of definitions of purpose and meaning are hardly supportable. There is, for instance, no isolatable meaning properly assignable to any institution or person, nor can the purpose of the life of an institution or person be defined solely in terms of the object of definition. Every definition of meaning and purpose must instead be stated in relational terms. A person is always becoming a person out of the dynamics of the relationships which constitute personhood. So also do institutions become. Relationships are the residence of both meaning and purpose. The effort to define person or institution without reference to relationship is to sacrifice meaning and purpose altogether.¹⁴

It was some time before I found it either necessary or possible to articulate these pre-suppositions in such a form. That they were actually present, however, as conditions precedent to my taxonomic enterprise became clear with the passage of time and the reflection which came with

¹⁴I recognize that these rather sweeping statements occur in their present context with little more than their own rhetorical expression for support. It is to be hoped that the remainder of this essay will supply what appears to be lacking.

it. It is difficult for the busy parish practitioner to find time for reflection which is not immediately productive in one or another of one's areas of responsibility. What glimpses of insight appear as by-products of sermon preparation, or class planning, must be accepted as gifts and hoarded against the day when some uninterrupted hours are found for the purposes of organization and consistent articulation. In the meantime, one must see that the work is done, and one continues to look for meaning and purpose within the doing of it.

It came as something of a shock to discover that meaning and purposes were not qualities conferred upon the functions of ministerial operation from outside, but were rather intrinsic to them. This discovery was followed by the more even surprising one that there was, in fact, no 'outside' to the functions of ministerial operation. The practice of seeking meaning and purpose in the dynamics of relationships, once begun, could not be halted. I could no longer look at the questions of meaning and purpose in the activities of my vocational pursuit without at the same time seeking answers to the larger questions of meaning and purpose in all reality, and especially in human existence.¹⁵

¹⁵To my mind, the great contribution of 'existentialist' thought, whether in its religious or atheistic garb, was never in any of the answers it proposed to the human dilemma, but rather in the way it taught many of us to ask questions. Heidegger, Jaspers, Sartre, Buber and others contributed

These are the fundamental questions of faith. My faith, and the reinforcement of it, had come to me originally as gifts . . . gifts which I never adequately examined. Over the year, a variety of modes of understanding of them had been serially utilized, some of them recognizably 'Christian,' and some of them most definitely not. All of them, on one way and another, had become part of what was by this time a fairly rigorously tested conviction that life makes sense, and moves towards greater sense. Now, however, it had become necessary to sort out the various strands of understanding, and to make what sense I could of them. At last, I realized that I was involved in fundamental theology and that the basic raw-material from which I worked was the experience of my own life-history. This is not to overlook the fact, of course, that that life-history by now contained liberal quantities of the results of other persons' theological constructions. By now it also contained a good many years of ministerial operation within the framework of a specific history and tradition. I had been involved in the baptism of hundreds of babies and adults, celebrated the Eucharist thousands of times, preached several hundred sermons, heard confessions, blessed and anointed sick people,

something to the way I ask questions. I would probably have done the same without personal exposure to any of them, however, since Bultmann and Tillich between them taught me the same things.

married and buried people whose voices and faces I could not forget. I had presented others for ordination and prepared still others for confirmation. The particular mode of my recalling the part of my life explicitly involved in ministerial operation was inextricably caught up in the recollection of the sacraments and sacramental offices of the Church in which I engaged in pastoral practice. Soon enough connections between the mode in which my remembering occurred and other learnings and experiences of my life-history began to emerge. All this was part of my struggle with the problem I have called taxonomic.

It was easy enough to find a definition of 'sacrament' which was broad enough to encompass the entire content of ministerial operation as I had come to experience it. Indeed, the need for a definition in terms of a conception of reality which sees meaning and purpose resident in relationships, is also a need for a definition which is thus inclusive. I hope that succeeding chapters of this essay will make that equation obvious. In the meantime, the search for meaning and purpose in my own personal and vocational life had led to a fair amount of study and reflection on the questions generally. The value which I had discovered in his work some years before, led to further reading and reflection on the findings and theories of Erik Erikson. It led, also, to the discovery that others were utilizing his insight and method to pursue searches that

seemed analogous to my own.¹⁶ I was beginning to see developmental psychology, sacramental theology, and the functions of ministerial operation, as all sharing a single field. It was in this context that I continued to wrestle with taxonomy. For a long time, I had been led astray and far afield by the notion of specialty and the presumed necessity for specialization. Now, perhaps because I am better at it in any event, I was led more toward synthesis than analysis, more in the direction of more inclusive generalizing than into serially acquired specializations.

Still, and even now, the experience of fractioning in my life goes on. There remains a radical disparity between the understanding of my life as being all-of-a-piece, and the experience of being torn from one situation requiring commitment of self, only to be thrust into another situation demanding equally complete attention. A morning of half-completed sermon preparation is interrupted by a pre-marital counseling session. A call from a potential suicide comes in the midst of a vestry goal-setting meeting. The call for a death-bed visit comes as one is dressing to go to the ballet. For that matter, an urgently-needed night's

¹⁶ e.g., Don Browning, Generative Man (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1973); Donald Capps, Pastoral Care (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1979); Evelyn Eaton Whitehead and James D. Whitehead, Christian Life Patterns (Garden City: Doubleday, 1979)

sleep is penetrated by a call from the police. That these things happen, and will continue to happen, simply makes all the more urgent some way to hold the pieces together. The experience of fractioning leads necessarily to the need for wholeness. What I am doing--all of what I am doing--must have something to do with salvation, or it has to do with nothing at all, is meaningless and without purpose.

So, all of the functions of ministerial operation have a salvific intention. They are all intended to lead toward wholeness, or to restore more closely to wholeness, the realities with which they have to do. These realities, of course, are human persons and their relationships. Consequently, ministerial operation is that which contributes to the becoming of humanness, whether guiding toward it as purpose or restoring meaning to it where lost or obscured. Homilectics, catechetics, liturgics, the cure of souls, evangelism, works of mercy, administration, discipline, sacramental ministration, spiritual development: this is perhaps not an all-inclusive list, even when discernment and prophetic proclamation and action are added to it. It will do, I think for the present purpose, which is simply to make clear that each of these functions is a part of a single intention and operation. This realization, in turn, is a product of what I want to call pastoral praxis.¹⁷

¹⁷The term praxis is frequently popularly used almost as a synonym for 'practice,' which is today the

PASTORAL PRAXIS

Pastoral praxis is the appropriate constructive theological work of the parish practitioner. Without suggesting priority, I want to maintain that such praxis includes three sources: the community's experience reduced to theoria in the 'deposit of faith,' and in one or more theological systems; the rapidly accumulating experience of a vast array of 'secular' disciplines, together with the theoretical formulations based on the arrangement of their empirical data; and the experience, the life-history content, of the practitioner (poiesis), especially that which is accumulated in the process of making application of the theories of the other two sources in specific human situations. The method utilized is one of constant criticism, and revision is the fruit of intense reflection. That is to say, each of the three sources is criticized and revised in the light of the others; nothing and no one is to be excluded from the process of revision, least of all the reviser. A 'theology

application of theory. This usage derives from the Hegelian and Marxian usage of the term. I will attempt to be consistent in making a distinction between 'practice' and praxis, by relying on a definition which is more nearly Aristotelian in origin. (Metaphysics; Nichomachaen Ethics.) In this view, the process of which praxis is a part is more nearly triadic (theoria - poiesis - praxis), than it is simply dialectical. The repeated 'more nearly's' with which this explanation is punctuated are absolutely necessary to its accuracy. Certainly, I am no Aristotelian, nor even crypto-neo-Thomist! Ultimately, I am indebted for the distinctions noted here to Pannenberg (Theology and the Philosophy of Science, p. 436).

of praxis' is the necessary product of the critical reflection of the practitioner upon what such a one is doing. I contend that parish practitioners of modest learning and ordinary honesty are 'doing' a very considerable amount of constructive theology, this 'theology of praxis' of which I speak. For most of us, an unfortunate lack of time, and of an appropriate forum, prevents adequate communication, and thus sees to it that even the best results are only parochial in their effects. Something, I am saying, is structurally wrong with an institution which calls itself 'the body of Christ,' but leaves untapped a rather considerable resource for the doing of Christ's work. The correction of these structural deficiencies is very probably the explicit responsibility of those of us who identify them. This is one reason, at least, for the expenditure of time and energy represented in this essay, and in the reflection which led to its being written. The work which produced the words you are reading must also be seen to have some salvific intention, or it is without purpose and devoid of effective meaning.

This essay is intended, too, as an exercise in constructive theology by one parish practitioner, a demonstration of a possibility which I believe is also a necessity. It is a portion of a theology of praxis demonstrating that the activity of 'doing' theology is, in fact, the field in which various facets of ministerial operation occur. It

is not simply a record of the conclusions of after-the-fact reflection, but rather a slice of continuing reflection which is coincident with the human experience which is productive of the next stages in the same process. Indeed, the relationship of experience to reflection is so very intimate that they might even be better described as the same event-in-process viewed from different perspectives. It is urgent that this point be clear, because the narrative enterprise tends to impose an artificial impression of linear sequence, or consequence, which is highly deceptive. It is the symbolization which is linear, not the reality symbolized.

Nor do I wish my description of what I have called praxis to be thought of in any way as prescriptive. I am not urging praxis upon my fellow parish practitioners because I think it obvious that, for the most part, they are involved in it already. Criticism and revision are constantly occurring, I have no doubt, though whether the time and energy for reflection are always available seems questionable. My own experience, however, is that criticism and revision without conscious reflection upon, and organization of, its product leads to serious difficulties. At best, there is a persistent feeling of guilt or anxiety about the disparity between faith professed and faith practiced. The fact that it is hardly likely that many of us will eliminate the problem altogether, should not hinder us from removing from our lives such occasions for its occurrences as we are able.

At the worst, there can come a habit of intellectual dishonesty from the keeping of various facets of our lives so rigidly compartmentalized from each other that the disparities are rarely noticed. This can lead ineluctably to other forms of dishonesty which may at last invalidate everything we are doing. Therefore, while I do not urge upon my fellows some new and additional duty, I do recommend on the basis of some painful experience that all of us consider carefully the total contents of our lives-in-process. For those of us who are specifically vulnerable by reason of dual or multiple vocations, this is especially important. Keeping things straight, while the barriers are down, is a hard-won skill for those who are ministers. The process is infinitely expanded when we are also husbands or wives, mothers or fathers.¹⁸

¹⁸I might well have described the conflicts which led to the articulations in this essay in terms of the questions raised by the connection between what one says in the pulpit and how such a one treats his wife, or communicates with his children. To ask such questions, of course, implies an intuition that some connection must in fact be there.

Chapter II

CENTRALITY OF THE SOTERIOLOGICAL ISSUE IN PARISH PRAXIS

THEOLOGICAL PRACTICE VS. 'APPLICATION'

From the moment one begins to look upon ministerial operation in a unitary way, arising within the field of pastoral praxis, rather than as an aggregate of specialties, each with its own aim and intention, the centrality of the soteriological issue becomes inescapably apparent. Precisely how this epiphany takes place is dependent largely, I suppose, on the understanding of vocation which brought the pastoral practitioner into ministerial operation in the first place. Did I, in the beginning at least, see myself principally as a preacher? Or, was my self-understanding, developed more recently and out of the popularization of certain insights of the 'group-life' phenomenon, that of an 'enabler?' In either event, the actual exposure to the experiences of ministerial operation will have compelled a re-opening of certain questions the answer to which I may have thought were settled previously on some theoretical basis. I can hardly propose to preach without paying attention to those to whom I preach, for example. The congregation seated before me on Sunday mornings is not composed of a given number of abstractions. Those are human persons out there, complex beyond adequate description. Each of them

has a network of associations and relationships, each has a multiplicity of needs, some of which are in conflict with other needs, both needs of their own and those of other persons. Leaving aside the issue of whether or not they perceive my function to be responder to certain of their needs, there is no avoiding the realization that I have the need to communicate something of value to them. "To whom do I preach?" must be a question the answer to which depends upon the accumulation of considerable specific experiential knowledge of people. I cannot hope to satisfy my own needs to communicate until I have discovered the appropriate symbols by which communication may be effected, and this is information I can acquire only by listening most carefully for points of correspondence and coincidence between my own experienced needs and those of others.

The question, "To whom do I preach?" is followed in rapid succession by others--most notably, "What do I preach?" and, "Why do I preach?". The answer to the first question is: "I preach to persons in need"; the answer to the second presupposes that I have discovered in some way what their needs are; and the answer to the third is based on the sometimes hopeful, and occasionally empirically verifiable, presumption that human communication is an appropriate mode for the satisfaction of those needs. These questions, and their answers, are very similar to the ones I would find if I saw myself as 'enabler' more centrally than 'preacher.'

The issues involved have to do with those things which make human existence human. They have to do with human need, either in the sense of that which is lacking or of that which is lost. They have to do with human communication. And they would be precisely the same issues if I were to begin from questions having to do with education or counseling or worship or whatever. As the shape of this essay will tend to indicate, my own central self-image at least began as that of sacramentalist. While that image has altered radically as a result of developmental experience, the asking and answering of questions nevertheless remains substantively influenced by it.

Human needs are not always experienced as needs, either in the sense of lack or that of loss, but they are always experienced as suffering, although the suffering may not always be localized in the specific person or persons whose 'needs' are most centrally the occasion of it. There are, for instance, both lacks and losses which are societally systemic, which are the occasion for both extensive and intensive suffering amongst persons who are at least peripheral to the system itself. As needs are not always experienced as needs by those who suffer from them, neither are they always discernable as such by those who observe them. The parish practitioner may have some difficulty in identifying needs, but there is no such problem with regard to suffering. The persons with whom one deals in parish practice are human, and

because they are, they suffer. Whether or not one sees suffering as that which is occasioned by lack or loss, the perception that it requires alleviation is unavoidable. Whether alleviation of pain is sought in its physical relief or in the discovery of direction and meaning within it, the reciprocal seeking of it comes at last to be seen as the purpose of ministerial operation. So, at last, I came to see it. Now, it may be difficult for me to see how anyone working in the parish setting, confronted daily, even hourly, with specific instances of human suffering, of the search for relief and the search for meaning, could fail to grasp the centrality of the soteriological issue. How, I ask myself, could any preoccupation with programmatic concerns be so profound as to deafen one's ears and blind one's eyes to the clamoring needs of persons in pain? In fact, many of us of my particular generation of 'parish professionals' did enter into the ministry with a kind of deafness and blindness that had at least two causes. The chief of the two was an abject failure on our parts, and on the part of the institutions which prepared us, to make an adequate integration between the social sciences and human sciences which had developed tools for analysis and question asking (not to mention therapeutic methodologies), and the specifically theological disciplines which we were given to understand had some answers to offer. The other was the completely inadequate examination of the philosophical presuppositions

of the various disciplines with which we became acquainted. The result, for many, was a kind of naive eclecticism in our approach to the various tasks and functions of ministry. We learned, after a fashion, how to pick up some of the tools of the human sciences for use in the teaching and counseling functions, presuming that they might be laid down again when we turned to homiletics, liturgics, and ascetics. We had learned that 'practical' theology was applied theology, but the use of the best that 'secular' disciplines had to offer made it always difficult, and often impossible, to apply the particular brand of orthodox, or neo-orthodox, dogmatics we had acquired to be the foundation on which we could stand as we ministered.

The choices we had seemed distinctly limited: we could retreat from informed orthodoxy to out and out fideism; we might elect to adopt one or another secular ideology, retaining the church as a base from which to practice; we could espouse 'religionless Christianity,' while making a good living in an alternative vocation; we could play a variety of roles as ministers, using whatever seemed useful, while refusing steadfastly to examine the presuppositions of the intellectual tools we were employing; or, we might actually begin to practice theology out of the real situations and relationships in which we found ourselves. This last has been the choice of many, and it is mine. It means a continuing occupation with constructive theology, the

development-in-process of an individualized 'revisionist' theology. There is no avoiding the necessity once the reality of the pluralistic nature of contemporaneity is fully grasped.

In the meantime, academic theologians of every stripe have been moving in the direction of 'revision,' until at last David Tracy has borrowed for the movement a name.¹ Precisely what kind of a 'revisionist' one turns out to be depends, of course, on what exactly one is revising. From whichever starting point one begins, however, the direction is always toward generalizing and universalizing out of the welter of pluralism. The contributions of the academics remains extraordinarily valuable, but they are not in the aggregate adequate to the needs of the parish practitioner. He/she, at last, must do an irreducible amount of the theologizing personally. What is needed in the parish is a theology of praxis, by which I mean--in contradistinction to Tracy--a theology which emerges empirically out of praxis rather than one which proceeds from theoria towards utilization. Practical theology can never again, I think be seen

¹David Tracy, Blessed Rage for Order (New York: Seabury Press, 1975), cf. Langdon Gilkey, Naming the Whirlwind (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1969). The designation 'revisionist' is borrowed from neo-Marxist criticism, especially of the Frankfurt school and refers to the dialectical methodology utilized by Marcuse, Adorno, Horkheimer, Block, et al., in integrating the findings of the human sciences with Marxian orthodoxy.

as applied theology, except for that moment immediately prior to its criticism and further corrective revision out of practice.

SOTERIOLOGICAL PRACTICE AND PRAXIS

This current essay is an attempt to sketch the vague outline of an emerging soteriology of praxis. For me, the praxis involved is principally that of pastoral care, which involves considerable individual and group counseling. The group of people whom I serve includes substantial numbers of the very poor, those socially disfranchised and without effective power over their own lives, and those involved in life crises of sufficient magnitude to leave them impotent physically or emotionally to respond to their own most basic needs. It includes, as well, a fair number of 'ordinary' people, all of whom suffer at one time or another, in ways that are directly experientially analogous to the suffering of the most deprived. The pragmatic query which I pose for myself is this: is a soteriology which emerges from such a practice 'useful' in proclamation and catechetics?² or, to put it another way, is a Christology which is principally functional one which can be preached and taught, or must one teach and preach a principally ontological Christology?

²The word 'useful' is employed in the relatively technical sense of Dewey's instrumentalism. The underlying assumption is that the 'practice' of theology involves the good of human persons.

This is a terribly 'existential' question for me. I preach and teach a great deal. For me, at least, it is most difficult to preach and teach other than what I live. I am beginning to find, though the way is most difficult, that it is not a matter of either/or. Once the question has been raised, however, and once an even tentative answer begins to define itself, the centrality of the soteriological issue is established. To the extent that there is any connection whatever between the 'care of souls' and the other tasks of ministerial operation, to that extent the question of 'salvation' and 'sanctification' are in the midst.

As I have previously suggested, a major reason why some of us long failed to grasp this really very clear fact was the tendency towards specialization among the functions of ministerial operation. Pastoral specialties are likely to become ideologies. Once equipped with descriptive jargon possessed of a theological flavor, they tend to absolutize themselves.³ What had been in the first instance legitimately picked up as an instrument of ministerial operation, becomes the master of its wielder. I want to plead for a disciplined and broadly informed generalism in parish practice. This is of the essence of 'revisionism' in the

³The oblique reference here is to Erik Erikson's notion of the development of the pseudo-species out of the tendency to ideologize; the present chapter contains abundant references.

theological enterprise, as it is also of the effort to understand natural and human phenomena in terms of 'field' or 'system' or 'structure.'⁴ The process of moving toward the kind of capability which I urge means the acquisition of both more knowledge and more experience than theological education is normally expected to provide. One mark of the legitimacy of a vocation to a professional parish ministry may come to be the willingness to acquire the tools suggested.

The parish practitioner who has become possessed of certain modest analytical and critical tools is in as good a position as anyone else to diagnose the nature of the problems which beset the people and the communities he/she is called to serve. The difficulty then lies in finding and choosing the modalities of response. How does one go about assisting in the creation of the context in which 'salvation' and 'sanctification' become experiential realities? The findings and insights of two quite separate psychiatric traditions seem to me to converge in such a way as to suggest the emergence of a tool for this purpose. Erik Erikson (to what extent self-consciously, I am not prepared to hazard)

⁴cf. Kurt Lewin, Field Theory in Social Science (New York: Harper & Row, 1951); B. K. Ridley, Time, Space and Things (Hammondsworth, Eng.: Penguin, 1976); Ervin Lazlo, The Systems View of the World (New York: Harper & Row, 1958).

comes out of an intellectual tradition that might be described as Vico, via Kant, Hegel, and Nietzsche to Freud. Harry Stack Sullivan, on the other hand, has an intellectual genealogy that seems American with but little dilution: Pierce, Cooley and James via Dewey and Mead. The fact--and I believe it is a fact--that they can be seen to contribute to an associative, rather than dialectical, synthesis in the definition of human personhood, seems to be attributable to the underlying concern of the century they share. If the nineteenth century was pre-eminently the 'century of the subjective,' the twentieth is certainly the 'age of inter-subjectivity.' It is not, of course, that inter-subjectivity is the controlling, conscious theme of contemporaneity. Rather, it is a name by which what many of us see as our most threatening problems may be called. It is not so much the sword by which we will live or die, as it is by the nature of our relationships one with another. It is the complex of relationships of person to person within and between the vast congeries of socialities that eventuate in those ethological and ecological effects that are creative of the world's future.⁵ Loving my neighbor has simply everything to do with the rate of depletion of natural resources,

⁵Erik H. Erikson, Toys and Reasons (New York: Norton, 1977) pp. 147-165. See also Gregory Bateson, Steps to an Ecology of Mind (New York: Ballantine, 1972)

infant mortality rates, the emergence of an ethnically determined under-class and the epidemiology of certain forms of mental and emotional illness.

SULLIVAN'S PERSON-IN-RELATIONSHIP

In Harry Stack Sullivan, theoria and praxis are conjoined in a way which is unique to the American pragmatic tradition. No questions of priority are raised, because the two are so intimately merged that it is virtually impossible to disentangle them. Theoretical formulations, for Sullivan, are in order to facilitate his therapeutic purpose. He demonstrates no interest in the rationalistic approach of developing theoretical 'systems' of a high order of abstraction. The emergence of a description of a 'self-system' occurs in response to experience in the clinical setting, and for the purpose of communication in lecture series intended to assist in the training of clinicians whose own practice may be assumed to provide the data by which refinement and expansion of the theoretical framework may be provided through criticism.⁶ There is, in fact, no real possibility of the rigidification of description of experience into ideology. Sullivan has left no real school, no uncritical disciples, no 'heretics.' Anyone who accepts

⁶Harry Stack Sullivan, The Interpersonal Theory of Psychology (New York: Norton, 1953) See especially chh. I and 2, and the Introduction, by Cohen.

his scheme or method is, by definition, a revisionist. Furthermore, one seems left free to accept certain implications of his findings without accepting the method which produced them. Those things have resulted in a pervasive "Sullivanian" influence in American psychiatric circles, obvious in people from Fromm to Arieti, sometimes acknowledged and sometimes not.⁷

When tendencies toward reductionism in exposition and description occur,⁸ (e.g., the collective concepts of 'anxiety,' 'satisfaction,' and 'security'), they tend to reveal the underlying influence of Dewey and Mead.⁹ It is this same influence which leads to the particular view of development upon which Sullivan bases both theoria and praxis. Development of the 'self-system' must always be described contextually, because development can only be

⁷To the best of my recollection, Fromm is not particularly generous in acknowledging 'influence' from any source. Arieti, in sketching the background of the development of his 'cognitive-volitional' approach, places Sullivan high on the list of influences. Silvano Arieti, "The Cognitive-Volitional School," in his The American Handbook of Psychiatry, (New York: Basic Books, 1974), I, Ch. 40c.

⁸There is no particular criticism implied here. There is a necessary 'reductionism' implied in the resort to the symbolization of experience in language for the purpose of communication.

⁹cf. John Dewey, On Experience, Nature and Freedom, (New York: Liberal Arts Press, 1960); George Herbert Mead, Mind, Self and Society (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1934)

experienced in context. It cannot be described without reference to inter-personal relationship, because even its observation is dependent upon relationship.¹⁰ An implication for the therapeutic situation is the recognition of an internal integrity within the relational event which in Freudian terms would be seen only as a transference requiring analysis. A corollary, of course, is the equally important reality of the counter-transference. The vital nature of the real relationship of therapist to client is clearly revealed, both as to its potential uses in positive development, and its very real dangers for both participants in dialogue.¹¹

Sullivan's description of the sequential development of the 'self-system' is based upon empirically observable changes in the mode and manner of symbolization and communication, at least for the most part.¹² The earliest developmental state, called the 'prototaxic,' is necessarily hypothesized on the basis of analogy from what follows.¹³ This is a stage in which experience consists of discrete, total, unrelated impressions, with no separation of self from

¹⁰Sullivan, loc. cit.

¹¹Harry Stack Sullivan, The Psychiatric Interview (New York: Norton, 1954).

¹²In this regard, note the frequently mentioned influence of the anthropologist Sapir. See Edward Sapir, Language (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1921)

¹³Sullivan, Interpersonal Theory of Psychiatry, pp. 28-29; 77-78.

environment and no differential localization of the source of the impressions. There is a correspondence, here, with certain descriptions of mystical experience, with the acute stages of some mental disorders, and with the recollections of some drug users. What is called 'consciousness expanding' sounds suspiciously similar to this hypothecated experience of the pre-personal self.

The second stage of experience in the development sequence Sullivan calls 'parataxis,' which is marked by the emergence of a rudimentary form of perception called 'prehension.'¹⁴ Prehension (first of the nipple, then of the distinction between 'good nipple' and 'bad nipple' rapidly extends to a kind of rudimentary capacity for foresight: crying is prehended as action which leads to the relief of distress. Still, however, there is no entrance of causality into the field of experience. Even the connection implied in this sort of foresight is one of association and concomitance. So also is the equally rudimentary capacity for the integration of data provided by two or more of the 'zones of interaction' with the environment (e.g., visual and auditory).

With the emergency of language comes the 'syntactic' mode of experience, made possible by the availability of

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 38-39; 83-84; 303-305; 442-443.

consensual validation.¹⁵ Relationships come to be seen as logical and causal, rather than private, idiosyncratic and entirely governed by primal anxiety and its relief.

Amongst the distinctions the 'prehensions' of which define parataxic experience, are the appraisals of the self by the other, which are differentiated by reference to their connection with anxiety, and personified as 'good me' or 'bad me.' With the arrival of syntactic experience these prehended appraisals (now self-appraisals) become fused as 'me.'¹⁶ In the meantime, however, some appraisals, provocative of surplus anxiety, are met with what Sullivan calls 'selective inattention.'¹⁷ That is, these portions of experience, together with both their positive and negative possibilities, are not allowed space in consciousness. These portions of experience are seen as relatively easily retrieved through the intervention of accepting others. If the anxiety or anger provoked by experience is so intense that 'selective inattention' is an inadequate protection of psychic safety, the method of defense is dissociation.¹⁸ Dissociated aspects of experience, and therefore of the self, cannot come into awareness through ordinary conscious human experience. Instead, they become part of the boundary

¹⁵Ibid., pp. 38-39; 183-184; 224-234; 298-300.

¹⁶Ibid., pp. 198-202. ¹⁷Ibid., pp. 233-234.

¹⁸Ibid., pp. 275-276; 327-328; 359-363.

of the patterns which describe the 'self-system' and part of that which limits access to experience of the new and novel, and limits also the amount of syntactic experience possible.

The course of development beyond infancy, through childhood, pre-adolescence (an important developmental moment in Sullivan's view), and adolescence, at its best leads at last to the integration of needs for lustful satisfaction with those for security and intimacy with one of the opposite gender. If this process eventuating in integration is successfully negotiated, there is a creative and satisfying resolution into the stage of true adulthood.¹⁹ If integration is not achieved, the self has no choice but to exist in a world of partial satisfaction--now of lust, now of security, now of intimacy, never of all three. A successful experience means freedom for continued growth in interpersonal relationships, with experience that is syntactic to the optimum level, thus guaranteeing meaning and direction in life. There has come to be the full development of what Sullivan calls 'orientation in living.' One has meaning and one has freedom, and one has the capacity to utilize these realities creatively.²⁰

For the parish practitioner, the analytical examination of Sullivan's, or Erikson's, or any other psychia-

¹⁹ Ibid., pp. 288-290.

²⁰ Ibid., pp. 243-244.

trist's effort to describe the human person, is for the central purpose of discovering means of access to those places where ministry is appropriate. Sullivan's approach is more than merely suggestive that such a means of access is through the dynamics of inter-personal relationships in social, cultural and institutional context. It further suggests that a focus of ministry is precisely within the distortions of structure discernible in the relationships which he holds to be constitutive of human personhood. He provides some means for description of some of the most confusing experience derivable from the practice of ministry: the fact that the frequently proffered assurance for forgiveness is so often refused by those who seem most in need of it. Often enough, there is no real possibility of freedom and meaning for the suffering person until the constituent inter-personal and social structures and relationships have been made vehicles of freedom and metaphors of meaning. Too often we exhaust ourselves in the attempted amelioration of painful symptoms, while the spread of fatal disease runs its course unabated. Sullivan's concern with larger structural problems is made especially clear in the lecture published under the title "Towards a Psychiatry of People,"²¹ and in those collected in the volume The Fusion of Psychiatry and Social Science. The attention to the responsibility

²¹Ibid., ch. 22.

imposed by the insights gained from clinical practice provides a ready point of contact with Erik Erikson, despite the profound differences in backgrounds and pre-suppositions of the two.²²

ERIKSON'S PERSON-IN-DEVELOPMENT

While Freud suggested that the maximal purpose of human life is intimate relatedness to persons and things (lieben und arbeiten), and Sullivan held that relatedness is the reality of human life, Erik Erikson seems to proceed from and to the realization that human life's purpose and its experienced reality, both, are to be found in relationships. In a convenient and insightful summary essay, which, for me at least, provides a context from which his entire life's work can be viewed, Erikson uses a restatement of the 'Golden Rule' as a vehicle for making clear the constitutive nature of mutual relationship for the human person, and for human society.²³ The far-reaching societal implications of his dialectically ordered developmental scheme is extensively explained in the series of lectures published as Toys and Reasons.²⁴ While, for Erikson, responsibility without

²²See especially the essays collected in: Erik H. Erikson, Insight and Responsibility (New York: Norton, 1964)

²³*Ibid.*, pp. 119-243. "The Golden Rule in Light of New Insight."

²⁴Erikson, Toys and Reasons (New York: Norton, 1977)

insight is an impossibility, insight which does not lead to responsibility is not worthy of the name. Psychotherapy designed to provide symptom relief within the context of 'adjustment' is condemned by Erikson in the process of defending himself against charges that the psychoanalytic tradition in which he worked provides prescriptions for, rather than descriptions of, the human person. He cogently notes the fact that the prevailing psychological 'ills' of a given time and place have an intimate and mutually defining relationship with the values implicitly accepted there and then. He urges a conscious and insightful attention to this reality on those who practice the psychotherapeutic arts.²⁵ From the beginnings of his own work on the 'life-cycle,' he carefully supplemented his clinical observations with sociological and ethological study designed to push back the barriers of cultural determinism to the place where the more nearly truly 'universal' nature of his development description could be discerned.²⁶ The concern which led to this practice is reflected most outspokenly in the things he has to say about the dangers and follies of 'pseudo-speciation' in a thermo-nuclear age.²⁷

²⁵Erik H. Erikson, "Psychoanalysis: Adjustment or Freedom?" in his Life History and the Historical Moment (New York: Norton, 1975)

²⁶Erik H. Erikson, Childhood and Society (New York: Norton, 1963)

²⁷Erikson, Toys and Reasons.

The pastoral practitioner who sees ministry as having a centrally soteriological focus, and who sees freedom and meaning as the constituent issues of soteriology, finds in Don Browning's study of Erikson a convenient and useful recasting of Erikson's ideas, in the context of comparison with those of other post-Freudians, which makes them easily available at least for didactic purposes.²⁸ While it is not Browning's expressed intention to do 'revisionist theology' with psychoanalytical tools, nevertheless he succeeds in making a contribution of some magnitude in this regard, and opens some methodological doors for those who are self-consciously seeking to define a 'soteriology of praxis.' According to his introduction, Browning's concern begins with "the major problem facing mankind," which is to say that he looks to psychoanalytic insights to provide himself with approaches to problems which are relational to the point of being global.²⁹ He proves--to my satisfaction, at least--that Erikson is a sound place to look for such insights.

It is Erikson himself, however, who provides the best model for the methodology of 'revision.' From the pro-

²⁸Don Browning, Generative Man (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1973). In a way this book can be seen as 'revisionist' psychoanalysis, if one does not assume that it orthodox Freudian doctrine which is being revised.

²⁹Ibid., pp. 7-9.

fessional historian's point-of-view, he must be seen as 'revisionist' of any of the current models of the scientific theory and practice of history. In writing of Luther's or Gandhi's 'psycho-history,' he does so out of clinical praxis, and for the purpose of expanding the horizon of praxis for clinicians, teachers, leaders and theoreticians.³⁰ Indeed, he combined in his own vocational life all of these functions, always specializing toward the end of making the general more general.³¹ The merging of the ideas of psycho-sexual development and psycho-social development, always described dynamically, but conceived organically, while consistently reiterated in all his major works, is never alone the end toward which he moves. Indeed, the schema is better seen--even in the earliest descriptive monograph--as a place to begin rather than a finished goal.³² Subtle amendments, sometimes by way of emphasis, sometimes through direct addition or correction on the basis of continuing praxis, emerge throughout the corpus of his writings.³³ Attention to this

³⁰Erik H. Erikson, Young Man Luther (New York: Norton, 1958); Erik H. Erikson, Gandhi's Truth (New York: Norton, 1969)

³¹Erik H. Erikson, "Identity Crisis in Autobiographical Perspective," in his Life History and the Historical Moment. Indeed, all of the essays in this volume are revealing of this aspect of Erikson's life and work. See also, Erikson, Toys and Reasons.

³²Collected in: Erik H. Erikson, Identity and Life Cycle (New York: International Universities Press, 1959).

³³Erikson, e.g., The emphasis upon nurture as it receives full development in Toys and Reasons.

fact is the best antidote for the propensity of some to accept the schema as prescriptive and predictive. Prescription and predictions are appropriate to praxis, never to theoria. Those who mishandle dogma in any field should correct themselves in this regard. Theologians are not the only offenders, but they remain among the most obvious. Freud's tendency to become prescriptive and predictive, 'dogmatizing' with at least as much fervor as those whom he criticized, became determinative in his evaluative rejection of religion as mere 'illusion.' Erikson, in his push toward the universal, retrieves his mentor's rejection, and looks specifically to humanity's 'religions' to provide the symbols whereby "shared visions" might grow to the eventual universal domestication of the tendency towards "pseudo-speciation."³⁴ In effect, this springs from the same order of motivation which leads to the concept of 'anonymous Christianity' in the foundational theology of Karl Rahner.³⁵ I do not wish to suggest that theologians should adopt without criticism the implied suggestions of Erikson. At best, this could only lead to a great deal of theoria dissociated from

³⁴ Ibid., passim, but especially pp. 85-93; 110-113.

³⁵ Karl Rahner, Foundations of Christian Faith (New York: Seabury Press, 1978). See also Küng's criticism of this notion in Hans Küng, On Being a Christian (New York: Doubleday, 1976)

the every day realities of praxis in the parish. Even those of us who are perfectly capable of understanding what Altizer and Hamilton are saying to us, feel that they might listen to us more carefully before they say anything at all. Nevertheless, we need to understand that which prompts Erikson's concern, and to grasp the implications of what he says for soteriology both individual and societal.

THE SOTERIOLOGICAL ISSUE

While the question of the viability of 'God-talk,' and the enormous energy being invested in the search for answers may very well be the central issue for all of us when it comes to be viewed in historical context, nevertheless the immediate issue for the parish practitioner is Christological, and more precisely soteriological. Consequently, the avalanche of scholarly work on Christology in recent years is of special interest to those of us involved in the practice of theology in the parish. We read Pannenberg, Moltmann, Kasper, Küng, Schillebeeckx, and the rest with special motivation. We are looking for the best possible (most useful) answers to these and other queries: 'from what do we need saving;' 'to what end are we to be saved;' 'for whom is salvation intended;' 'what are the measurable marks of salvation?' It is not that we look for the scholars to provide immediate answers to application in the pastoral situations of our practice, but rather that

they may give us some context for receiving the data of our own experience with suffering people in such a way that adequate response might be made.

To the extent that we think in these terms at all, we are all involved in 'doing Christology from below' in the company of the scholarly professionals.³⁶ We begin, as do they, from a consideration of the human situation. Our effort is in the same direction as theirs, but there remains an irreducible difference in approach. We are both aiming at a repair of that radical separation of the person of the Christ from his salvific work, which is intrinsic to virtually all the classical Christological statements and systems. The professionals begin with reflection; we begin with immediate confrontation with the experience on which the reflection is based. The effort to repair the breach between being and function leads them immediately to the question of priority. This is, in fact, the central philosophical issue which, time after time, apart from, or in addition to the various strands of psychological issues, presents itself in counseling situations. Most often the clothes this question wears is the issue of the priority of consciousness or communication in the self-understandings

³⁶ See my bibliographical note on "Christological Works," for those materials which contributed directly to the effort at synthesis in this chapter.

of the dialogue participants, or as I might restate it: where does reality begin, with the subjective, or with the intersubjective; which comes first, the ontological or the functional? It is, you see, at bottom the same problem faced in the effort to do constructive Christology. It is, as well, the problem which both Harry Stack Sullivan and Erik Erikson, from quite different philosophical stances, strive to resolve.

The question I am trying to articulate is perhaps most acutely presented in dealing with an arrested adolescent 'borderline personality.'³⁷ It can often take quite a time to learn that the presenting complaint, 'I have no friend,' in fact means, 'I don't know who I am;' or, conversely, that 'I feel like I'm not alive,' means 'nobody understands what I'm saying.' In the long run, it becomes clear that all the statements are describing the same (subjective?) reality. The problem is, where does the sufferer break out of the circle of his suffering? Empirically, the question is easily answered. Whether in formal therapy, or through the intervention of friends and acquaintances, communication is established or re-established, and consciousness of self emerges: when one functions, one is. It is arguable, of course, that, like prevenient grace, some

³⁷ cf. Silvano Arieti, Interpretation of Schizophrenia (New York: Basic Books, 1974), Ch. VII. Erik H. Erikson, Identity: Youth and Crisis (New York, Norton, 1968), Ch. IV.

residual, or germlike presence of consciousness must precede communication as its possibility. In fact, however, we act as though it were the other way around, and when we do, it works. The description of how and why it works is, of course, another matter.³⁸

For a long while theology, and to one extent or another the human sciences as well, accepted more or less gratefully the Kantian solution to the chaos wrought by the forces of secularization unleashed by the Enlightenment. This provides a solution of sorts to the priority question by placing the real self (mine or the Christ's) beyond the power of experience to touch it. The problem is that people who want both wholeness and freedom in their lives will seek in vain for them in a Kantian world. A sensible universe made safe for Newtonian physics and Euclidean geometry, has no room for freedom, and the making of it safe excludes the possibility of wholeness. The removal of the ontological and the functional to separate 'worlds,' prohibits any practical integration of the two. Consequently, the Kantian solution had little viability or longevity in the human sciences. It remains, however, a potent force in theology, especially in those approaches labeled 'transcendental Thomist.' In the latest work of people like Rahner and Schillebeeckx, there

³⁸ Arieti's "cognitive-volitional' approach provides a suggestive hint at mechanism. See note 7, above.

are indications of ingenious solutions which may one day result in an at least temporary 'have your cake and eat it' resolution.³⁹ The promise to Schillebeeckx to provide a full-blown soteriology as a sequel to his monumental Christology leads one to hope.⁴⁰

In the meantime, any reliance on the Kantian view, while solving the priority problem, discovers in the solution a greater problem. The best that can be said of it is that, since it is by definition beyond resolution, it need not intrude into practical matters for ordinary people. This might impress some as a definition of the entire theological enterprise. Ordinary people are, in any event, left with a question of practical priority, which does continue to make a difference in such matters as career decisions, or marital relationships, for example. The question "who shall I become?" is not in any practical sense divorceable from the question, "what shall I do?" Both questions demand answers in the here and now. For good or ill, the

³⁹In my estimation, Rahner's recently published foundational theology provides a significant leap forward from his previous positions on Christology. Rahner, op. cit. pp. 178-311. cf. Karl Rahner, Theological Investigations, Vol. I (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1961-66), I, IV, V

⁴⁰Edward Schillebeeckx, Jesus (New York: Seabury Press, 1979). p. 669. He indicates that he considers his massive work only as "prolegomenon" to praxis, the details of which would be worked out in a soteriology.

twentieth-century person's self-understanding tends to be historical: one sees onself contextually, in a reciprocal giving and gaining of meaning. This is part of the reaction to the Kantian view which places the realm of meaning beyond the vagaries of causation which inhabit time and space. Only so could meaning be a product of freedom, for Kant.

The suffering searcher for meaning, however, is never content with meaning which remains transcendent. If it is to be of any use to such a one, it must grasp the sufferer imminently in the circumstances of his/her suffering. I suspect that it was the pastoral experience and concern of Schleiermacher which led to the development of an epistemology which was a pioneering effort at explanation of this datum, and one which fits well enough the findings of contemporary clinical and experimental psychology.⁴¹ The subject-object identity as 'that which is experienced' of the newborn child is a matter pretty well demonstrated at this point. The difference between the 'me' and the 'not me' is arrived at developmentally, and is describable as a function of the emergence of communication.⁴² The human person comes to be historically, which is to say through a process of alienation. Fortunately, this is a totally

⁴¹Friedrick Schleiermacher, On Religion (New York: Harper & Row, 1958), pp. 26-101.

⁴²cf. Sullivan, Interpersonal Theory of Psychiatry, pp. 158-171.

different sort of alienation from that postulated by Kant. Equally fortunately, the work required for the repair of the alienation occurs in a far different world from that in which Kant worked. It is a world no longer safe for Newtonian physics, for it has been revealed to be both larger and smaller than that science can explain. Freedom as the potential of novelty, is not only allowable, but required in an Einsteinian and Heisenbergian world.

If a sufferer looks for relief in such a world, if he/she seeks a savior, it is one with a 'face' the outline of which Schleiermacher began to outline, and which the best minds at work in Christology are still trying more clearly to delineate. Communication, on the basis of shared experience, is what is needed, and this goes far beyond the potential of either confrontation or instruction. Confrontation, often enough, seems the occasion of the sufferer's suffering; teaching explains it, perhaps, but does little to relieve it. Kierkegaard's Christ, which is very like Barth's and even Bultmann's, can help the sufferer understand his/her suffering, but the description of the answers to it falls into the category of cold comfort.⁴³ Here is a confrontational, rather than a dialogic savior, uprooted historically in order to guarantee his contempor-

⁴³Sren Kierkegaard, Philosophical Fragments (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1936), pp. 125, 130.

⁴³Sren Kierkegaard, Philosophical Fragments (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1936), pp. 125, 130.

aneity. The sufferer who understands him/herself historically can engage in salvific dialogue only from within the terms of historicity. Among contemporary theologians, Pannenberg may understand suffering less well than he might, but he certainly grasps the notion of historical self-understanding as well as any, a self-understanding which is necessarily developmental, contextual, reciprocal and social.⁴⁴ This is an understanding he owes to Schleiermacher, but it does not blind him to the fact that Schleiermacher never discovered the means to root the Christ historically in his own life.⁴⁵ His historical nature is revealed in the sufferer's history (experience) only. This is the 'danger' of the soteriological approach; Pannenberg sees it, notes it, but does little to resolve it.⁴⁶

What is missing in Schleiermacher is any attempt to pursue the theological notion of sacramentality as the mode whereby historically distant reality is made the reality of contemporary experience. One or another use of the more contemporary understanding of 'symbol' corrects this deficiency in the Christological work of the best people working

⁴⁴Wolfhart Pannenberg, Jesus--God and Man (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1977) See especially the "After-work: to the fifth German edition, pp. 399 ff.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 48.

⁴⁶Ibid., pp. 47-49.

in the field today.⁴⁷ Pannenberg possesses this understanding, but the 'danger' of soteriology seems to prevent him from pursuing it in any but the most abstract and academic manner. The parish practitioner does well to be warned by Pannenberg, but he/she does not have the luxury of postponing soteriological inquiry. Fortunately, we engage in such inquiry from precisely within the context of sacramentally constituted community. Fortunately, because necessity compels us to begin with soteriology in the immediate details of much of our practice; when one is faced with suffering, one is compelled to take it seriously, and in so doing one suffers. Therefore, a Christology of praxis begins with the passion, encompasses death and resurrection, and only then seeks descriptions which are ontological. Incarnational theology, in its contemporary versions based essentially on Hegelian notions, is useful only after the fact.⁴⁸ Explaining to me that the wholeness and freedom and meaning I longed

⁴⁷ See especially Schillebeeckx, pp. 636-652. cf. Edward Schillebeeckx, Christ the Sacrament of the Encounter with God (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1963). This later work seems to have influenced all of the Roman Catholic theologians consulted in the preparation of this synthesis. It was, in turn, inspired by the need to explicate the Vatican II documents: Sacrosanctum Concilium; Apostolicam actuositatem; and, especially, Gaudium et spes.

⁴⁸ To my mind, the best attempt to preserve the vital insights of Incarnational Christology, while insisting upon the ministry of Jesus as starting point, is: Walter Kasper, Jesus the Christ (London: Burns and Oates, 1976) The Hegelian influence, however, remains very strong.

for were at last experienced as a result of the Spirit coming to full self-consciousness, which in turn was consequent upon its unique and historical first occurrence in Jesus, may help my understanding of that through which I have already moved. In the immediate extremity of suffering, however, this is, to be blunt, so much meaningless twaddle. Indeed, the picture popular piety paints of the suffering Jesus is of more immediate help; the real presence of Christ's suffering in immediate conversation with mine is what I really want.

That such conversation can and does occur, and that it is experienced as 'therapeutic' or 'salvific,' is empirically verifiable. It is my contention that efforts to understand and describe these data of experience leads inevitably to the larger, contextual, questions which we previously asked. These questions, now the queries of praxis rather than theoria, are understandable as corollaries of the relationship between the human person and the structures and dynamics of human relationship. The danger in this line of thought is the tendency, inherited from Kantian critical method, and sometimes re-enforced by certain rigid applications of the anti-dogmatic dogmas of empiricism, to determine the priority of person or society one to another. I would suggest that any effort to pose such a question of priority, much less to answer it, is to intrude unnecessarily the issue of metaphysical transcendence at precisely the

wrong point, assuming a substantial, ontic, a priori status for one or the other. The question creates, I feel, a false antinomy. The self and society are mutually reciprocal realities which may be subsequent to some event, but not one to the other. Indeed, the reciprocity of self and society provides a ready metaphor for the relational nature of all reality, a metaphor which has as its definitive analog in history the event of incarnation. Thus, the doctrine of the person of Christ finds its place pursuant to the development of soteriology.

Whether this line of discussion is altogether convincing, or not, it at least makes unavoidable a consideration of the connection between the suffering of the single human person, and the suffering discernible structurally in societies. A soteriology of praxis is forbidden by the fact of its emergence from and in relational context to concern itself alone with 'personal salvation.'⁴⁹ There is, or ought to be, discoverable within the event of theological praxis in the parish setting, that which is both reflective of, and constitutive of, theological praxis in society, culture, and the universe of humanity. Those words and deeds which can legitimately be described as part of salvific

⁴⁹ Amongst those authors specifically considered in this synthesis the best and most convincing connection is made by Küng, passim, but esp. pp. 554-565. (See also the works of the "liberation" theologians: Metz, Gutierrez, Secundo, Soelle, etc.)

process in the one context should be discernible as metaphors of those words and deeds which bear salvific potency in the other. And if discernible, then proclaimable, and teachable, as well.

The ensuing chapter attempts to find the connections between the suffering of the particular person-in-community and the suffering which can be seen and experienced within the larger structures of society. It should be abundantly clear by now, but it may not be amiss to verbalize the point specifically, that I refuse to acknowledge any priority in soteriological praxis for the specific human person above the relational contexts by which such a one is definable. Nevertheless, in actual practice one is controlled by two realities: first a beginning must be made somewhere, if one is not to succumb to either the scylla of hopelessness on the charybdis of rationalistic theorizing; and, second, experience abundantly proves that efforts at the amelioration of structural causes or instances of suffering which are not explicitly based on an understanding and sympathetically identified grasp of basic human needs demonstrated in the process of individual life development are doomed to failure. Many of the various possibilities, deduced on the basis of well-intentioned theory, are discovered by analysis which takes into consideration the psycho-social development of the human person to be at best inadequate and at worst downright destructive.

Chapter III

HUMAN GROWTH IN RELATIONSHIP AND COMMUNITY

CHURCH: AN EXPERIENTIAL DEFINITION

I must begin this chapter with the gravest and most serious caveat. What we are engaged in here, I must remind myself and my readers, is an effort to do theology, neither psychology nor sociology, nor any other science. The 'truth' is important to us in this effort, as it should be in any exercise that pretends to be 'scientific,' but it is not an abstract truth which is the value we hold. We are, rather, seeking concrete truth with a history. The context in which we work is that of human relationships, particularly those constitutive of 'Church,' but also including specifically those which define 'family,' 'community,' 'institution,' and 'society.' Therefore, the truth we are seeking is human truth, and specifically that truth which is discoverable within the terms of, and is intended for the benefit of, what Erik Erikson would call human 'actuality,' or Gregory Bateson might denominate human 'ecology.'¹ Further, we are in search of a human, concrete, truth about that process

¹Gregory Bateson, Steps to an Ecology of Mind (New York: Ballantine, 1972); Erik H. Erikson, "Psychological Reality and Historical Actuality," in his Insight and Responsibility (New York: Norton, 1975), pp. 161-215.

which Christian theology has traditionally described with the words 'salvation,' and 'sanctification.' This is the process which has previously been defined as leading towards wholeness, or restoring more closely to wholeness, human persons and their relationships. We are, in sum, involved in looking at the process of human development as it occurs within the terms of given relationships. I find myself, and what growth and disturbance of growth I currently experience, defined most specifically in the given terms of 'family' and 'Church.' Since my own experience is offered as one of the major sources of data for what I have called a 'theology of praxis,' it is with the relationships constitutive of 'family' and 'Church' that I begin, though they are not examined necessarily in that order.

While much debate rages as I write these words over the definition of 'family,' for the moment at least, I am going to pre-suppose a rather conventional definition, since I live a rather conventional life. The effort to define 'Church,' however, is an immediate and difficult necessity. It is sometimes difficult to remember that one's definition, based on recalled experience, is likely to be quite unlike that of someone else whose experience has been altogether different. Perhaps this reality explains at least some of the gallons of ink spilled in the effort to make clear the

meaning of 'Church' in theoretical tomes and treatises.²

One whose work-life, at least, is totally involved in the various facets of ministerial operation is likely to accumulate not only more experience of 'Church,' but also a quite different experience from one whose exposure is somewhat less. Then, too, the kind and quality of experience of those engaged primarily in academic and theoretical theology is quite likely to be of a rather different order from that of the parish practitioner. A seminary professor experiences 'Church' rather differently from me, I am sure. Recently, I had a more or less public conversation with the Dean of the seminary from which I was graduated. He was very sincerely seeking guidance for the development of his institution's continuing education program. He seemed legitimately startled when I replied, that for some of us at least, the announced course content was of less importance than the method of instruction utilized. What I needed most, I said, was some way to share what I had to offer from out of the accumulated experience of parish practice, and some way to learn from the experience of others. I was looking, I suppose, for conversation, and conversation on the ground of some recognition of parity between the participants. In regard, especially, to the definition of 'Church,' I am quite

²See Avery Dulles, Models of the Church (Garden City: Doubleday, 1974). In addition to his own creative contributions, Dulles reviews the literature extensively.

capable of reading the same books as professors read--and write. I need something more than other people's stochastic models by which I may seek some understanding of my experience. I need a method, specifically, for my experience to come in, and be accepted in, the 'stoa.' In large measure, after all, my experience in this regard is the 'random variable' at issue. To be 'Church' for me, there must be response to my need.

The major problem is that most efforts at definition, whether or not the fact is admitted, proceed by means of differentiation and exclusion. Certainly, my experience of 'Church' is different from my experience of other relational contexts, but the difference, I think, is more nearly one of inclusion than anything else. For instance, the phrase "parish family" has become very popular as descriptive of the church in local experience. I will lean heavily on this popular definitional expression, because I think it captures a reality-in-experience that others do not. Nevertheless, it is hardly adequate to express even the most prevalent content of my experience. It is not what a family is that makes the analogical comparison inexact, but rather what a family is not. The parish practitioner avoids consideration of the more mechanistic, 'institutional,' features of 'Church' both to his own great peril and that of those to whom 'ministry' is offered. To the extent that such features are a part of 'family,' however, they are entirely incidental to

the experience of relationship in that context. On the other hand, it is the mechanical, 'institutional,' aspect of the parish which makes possible the experiences of mutual nurturing and intimacy which are described by the term 'family.' Simply in terms of experience, and without reference to any theoretical model, the practitioner knows 'Church' very much as 'institution' and 'society' at the very time he/she knows it as 'family' or 'community.' Any attempt rigidly to apply Tönnies' Gemeinschaft/Gesellschaft distinction to my experience of 'Church' is doomed to failure.³ My experience requires a definition which deliberately includes the meaning of both concepts.

This is not to say that there is not an appropriate weighting to be given to those facets of experience which might be described as mechanical, on the one hand, and organic on the other. The Pauline analogy which calls the church 'the Body of Christ' puts the emphasis in the right place. Certainly, "body" is an organism, there is no doubt of that, but without some fairly 'mechanical' understanding of the relationship of its parts, and their relative priority one to another in a variety of functions, there is no real possibility of comprehending the organization of the 'organism.' When the experience of mechanism seems to

³Ferdinand Tönnies, Community and Society (New York: Harper & Row, 1963). The first German edition of this classic work was published in 1887.

obscure or supersede the experience of organism, however, there is surely something gravely wrong. Perhaps, 'Church' as such, is no longer being experienced at all. Despite the problems a parish practitioner can and does have with governing bodies, canon law, judicatories, bishops, conventions and the like, the weight of experience, at least in the parish setting itself, is of 'Church' as organism. There is not only provided the opportunity for mutuality, intimacy, nurturing and supportive guidance in growth, but the reality of these things in experience, as well. Instances of 'burn-out' can and do occur, and some of them have to do in their origin with an inadequacy of the one sort of experience compelled by an excess of the other. Such occurrences are, I think relatively rare. Most instances of 'burn-out,' when adequately diagnosed, turn out to be the result of the failure of the practitioner to accept what was available in terms of support, for whatever intra-psychic reasons may have been present. There is a presumption, perhaps sometimes ill-founded, that the parish practitioner should be, and remain most of the time, a mature adult. It is not so much the expectations of others which lead me sometimes to the brink of real exhaustion, as it is my own distorted or disarranged expectations of myself and others.

By and large, I experience 'Church' as a positive context in which to continue my own process of human growth,

and in which to receive such reparative attention as I need. There are times, many times even, when I experience 'Church' very much as I experience 'family,' at its best. For me, the two contexts of experience overlap to an extent that makes the disentangling of experience for the purpose of contemplation and consideration almost impossible. While I continue to do my best not to impose on other a presumption based largely on my own experience, it is nevertheless impossible that some residue of such a presumption will not color to some extent my involvement in the various facets of ministerial operation. In other words, I think it is demonstrable that the more positive experiences of 'family' affect substantially, if not centrally, the way in which I work and the manner in which I relate to others in parish life. It is from a viewpoint in large measure constituted by this reality, then, that I try to examine the process of human growth-in-community as the arena of soteriological operation. My own 'being saved' is the experience from which I speak, as it is that from which I work.

The effort, however difficult and basically unsuccessful, to which I referred in the preceding paragraph, to contemplate and consider the content of my experience, is one example of what I understand by 'self-transcendence.' Self-transcendence is the experience-in-process of becoming. It is not in and of itself an experience of God, a revelatory of 'salvific' experience, but it is a context in which

such experience can be, and sometimes is, begun. I say, 'begun' because I firmly believe that some decision must be reached and some action taken before the experience becomes 'salvific.' That is to say, contemplation and consideration is part of 'crisis' as it is lived and re-lived in human life, and as it contributes to the becoming whole of a person-in-community.

I have raised the issue of self-transcendence at this point because the concept is helpful to me in trying to reach some understanding of 'Church' which corresponds sufficiently to my own experience to allow it to be used in the discussion which follows. I would like to suggest that 'Church' might be described as community and society in the process of self-transcendence. Granted, 'Church' can be seen as one institution amongst others, and often enough that is precisely what it is. Or, it can be seen as one sub-community over against a larger community. Sometimes it is that, as well. I am suggesting, however, that it is also intrinsically more than institution, and more than community or society. It is what all of these arenas of human relationship are striving to become, or rather, it is when optimally present in the process of such a becoming itself. For me, the work of the church which traditionally identifies it as 'catholic' describes this reach towards universal inclusivity. When I am questioned about the propriety of my work in teaching or counseling (or for that

matter, feeding or clothing) those who by institutional definition are 'outside the church,' my answer comes out of this sort of understanding. If extra ecclesiam nulla salus, then the definition of 'Church' becomes vitally important.

A MINISTERIAL LIFE-IN-RELATIONSHIP

For the purposes of discussion in this chapter, I want to pre-suppose the accuracy of Sullivan's findings that person is always 'person-in-relationship.' With this pre-supposition in mind, I would like to proceed to discuss the development of human personality, using Erikson's ontological model as a super-structure for description. I want to begin, however, not with the earliest stage of life, but rather with my own life, as it is 'on the hoof,' so to speak. I want to look at my own relationships, as one who has become parent, and still 'parents' quite a lot, and as one who has been mentor to several, and still engages in mentoring. I would like to examine, briefly at least, the functions of ministerial operation as they are affected by these other roles in my life. I also want to see in myself the reality of the life-stages which precede my own, and their still real presence in my current life-in-relationship, in family and community, in society, and especially in

'Church.'⁴

In the kind of introspective bookkeeping one does of the details of one's life-experience, 'success' and 'failures' in both effectiveness and affect for a mid-aged, mid-career person, can be accumulated under the rubric of appropriate conformity to, or regression from, the conceptual quality implied in the Eriksonian life-stage descriptive title "generativity." The word itself describes both a kind and a quality of relationship. Above all, the word tells of both a role and a responsibility a person may have in and for that which is coming-to-be. The problem, of course, with the sort of introspective cataloguing suggested here is that it runs the grave dange of mis-using the Eriksonian scheme in a prescriptive rather than a descriptive manner which was the announced intention of its developer.⁵ Since the introspective process itself presents at least the possibility of self-transcendence in the effort to see myself-in-relationship as an objectification, and since the purpose of such a pursuit is to open for choice the possibilities of a personal future for that same self-in-

⁴Since the discussion this chapter from this point on assumes familiarity with Erikson's scheme of personal development, his charts which indicate the relationship of the 'stages' to each other, and list the key-concepts for each 'stage,' are included in the Appendix.

⁵Erik H. Erikson, Childhood and Society (New York: Norton, 1963), pp. 273-274.

relationship, it would at the very best be self-defeating to accept any sort of prescription whose effect it would be to foreclose some possibilities for free choice. How, under these circumstances, the introspective one might ask, is even the contemplation of conformity to, or regression from, any descriptive model permissible? Erikson's answer would be to reiterate once again the ontogenetic nature of the model, to point out that the emerging characteristics which go to make up the description of the life-stage of 'generativity,' are characteristics both observable and experienced as intrinsic to the human person-in-relationship.⁶ Their emergence, and their distortion, as well as the tendency to regress from them, are all implied when the word 'human' is used at all. Or, at least when it is used of a person who has reached a certain point in his/her own (inevitable?) development. Not the fact of humanness, but certainly its quality, Erikson would say and I choose to accept, for a person like me depends on the ratio of 'generativity' to 'stagnation' emergent in my life and its relationships just now.⁷ I am becoming whom I might be to the extent that the ratio is 'favorable;' to the extent that it is not, I may

⁶For Erikson, the characteristics of the various stages emerge from the genetic ground-plan which is definitive of 'human.' See Erikson, Childhood and Society, p. 271

⁷See especially Erikson, Childhood and Society, pp. 247-274.

even regress to a stage of 'pseudo-intimacy' characterized by a kind of self-indulgence which can altogether prevent my taking responsibility for my own offspring, my aging parents, or the fruits of any creativity or productivity of which I might have been capable. I might 'produce,' but only to possess utterly or to reject utterly that which I had produced. But this time, I will have become capable of 'care' to one extent or another, or, at the very worst, I will have lost the capacity either to receive or give it.

I cannot speak for one who neither wants to give nor aches to receive 'care.' I can only abstract from my own experience what are the 'needs' for meaning, purpose and direction in the life of such a one. Perhaps I am altogether wrong, in which case Erikson is certainly wrong as well, even to consider the possibility of such a person's 'needs.' Nevertheless, my needs are clear enough to me; if I do not really know what such a mythical person wants from me, at least I can understand with utter clarity what I need to give, to provide, for that one and many others. The 'utter clarity,' however, becomes a bit clouded when I continue on to ask who 'that one' may be, and who are the 'many others.' There is no doubt at all about my need to be needed, but only the questions of by whom and under which circumstances. The New Testament redefinition of 'neighbor,' not in terms of identify of the person nor of pre-existing relationship either social or proximate, but rather in terms

of identifiable need, on the one hand, and means and opportunity of response, on the other, may be the only clue one needs for the pragmatic resolution of this conundrum. In any event, as I can best recall it, both my understanding of the need and the first and most explicit experiences of its satisfaction came in the context of 'family.' The word 'care' first began to be filled with the experienced need to provide it when my children began to reach out for it from me. The mutuality of giving between my wife and myself had prepared me for it, no doubt, but the new experience of parenting was, in fact, new. And its newness remained, and still remains, even as I look for words to describe what began so long ago.

'Stagnation,' the opposite pole for 'generativity' in Erikson's dialectical scheme, is not only that which, in a seriously unfavorable ratio, may prevent the recognition of the need to be needed, the requirement to care. It is also that which may distort and confuse the need and requirement into a dynamic of relationship which is seriously destructive of persons and their relationships. Here are some of the ways, I think, in which 'stagnation' may work to distort and even destroy the relationship which, at best, deserves to be called 'care.' I may demand from my children, as evidence that what I need to give is accepted, a quality of relationship (Erikson calls it 'intimacy') which can appropriately be had only on the basis of some near

parity of development. This distortion may lie at the bottom of many instances of near or actual incest. Further, relationships that are, in this sense, basically incestuous are far from uncommon in extra-familial settings. The temptations to relationships describable in this sense are many and often very subtle in the context of ministerial operation. The taboo which most frequently effectively operates inside the family to prevent actual overt sexual intimacy may also operate quite efficiently in the parish setting. Nevertheless, the allowing and encouraging of a kind of 'intimacy' which is essentially incestuous is something to which every parish practitioner may be tempted and to which all too often he/she succumbs. The experience of loving and having been loved in a genuine situation of mutual self-giving makes the acceptance of the role either of seducer or seduced one rather more difficult, perhaps even impossible, in any full and complete sense of the word.

Another possibility of the emergence of 'stagnation' lies in the confusion of the need to be needed with a need for commitment. I can make of my children objects of an unhealthy devotion, idols rather than persons. If I have failed, or to the extent to which I have failed, to discover and build into my own life-in-relationship the quality of continuity and stability, I may require it of my children, or those around me. I may insist on making them become, along with me of course, a group which is 'us against the

world,' in which and by means of which I can be someone to myself. The fairly frequent evolution of individual parishes into sect-like bodies usually includes in the process of evolution the distortion of the various facets of ministerial operation in the direction of the establishment of an exclusivist ideology. Fidelity is as much a need for me as being needed, but it is hardly the same thing, nor is it an appropriate substitute for it. On the contrary, the effort to equate the two virtues of caring and being faithful, or the substituting of one for the other, is clearly an evidence or symptom of stagnation when it occurs in the life and behavior of a presumably 'mature' person. Again, the temptations are substantial: sect-type parishes often present themselves as amongst the most 'successful' on the basis of standard institutional forms of measurement.

As will have become perhaps all too abundantly clear by this point, I have been tracing the potential failures in 'care,' and the possible manifestation of 'stagnation,; back through the various Eriksonian stages of epigenetic development. This method has been chosen for two purposes: to permit the display of the familiar system which Erikson developed to describe the process of human development; and to make clear the intricate inter-relationship of the various positive and negative poles of each stage, together with their corresponding 'virtues,' in a manner more explicit

than the usual schematic arrangement permits.⁸ The method, of course, also permits me to utilize the descriptive process itself what seems to me relevant experiential data out of my own life story in both family and 'Church.' It is perhaps advisable at this point, however, to interrupt the discussion I have begun in order to make clear that the underlying cause of a failure to reach a favorable ratio at the stage of 'generativity' is traceable to a fundamental deficiency at the very ground-level of development as Erikson describes it. 'Stagnation,' in whatever of its various guises it may be discovered, is finally found to be symptomatic of a deficiency of 'basic trust,' and a failure to 'hope' to inform the relationships in which it is diagnosed. Needless to say, such a deficiency in the life of one who is cast in a 'generative' role means that the traditioning or transmission of basic trust and hope to those who are in relationship to such a one becomes at best extremely problematical. To the extent that I close or delimit the potential 'futures' which hope might otherwise have opened to me and to the complex of relationships in which I find myself, to that extent do I deprive those for whom I have some responsibility, my children for instance, of some appropriate object of trust and of that which might

⁸The problem with the familiar charts (see Appendix) is that they tend to introduce a kind of mechanistic reductionism into what Erikson usually strives to describe quite organically.

be hoped for, as well as the ability simply to hope. While I think it is demonstrably inappropriate for the parish practitioner to arrogate to him/herself the role of traditioning parent for all the persons with whom vocation has established relationship, nevertheless the responsibility remains for 'generative' behavior in relationship with many at all times, and perhaps with all at some times. Some of the possibilities of misuse of this responsibility have already been explored. There are others, revealed by life-experience and describable in terms of Erikson's scheme.

To continue the catalogue of possible modes of the emergence of 'stagnation' in the life-defining inter-personal relationships, I will mention the tendency of a parent to 'design' the emerging personality of a child, rather than to guide that development through provision of opportunities for successful accomplishment and of positive recognition of such performance as it occurs. To the extent that I have always felt fundamentally inadequate or inferior in terms of performance, I am most likely to become a parent who so lacks trust in the possibilities of my child's future that I feel compelled to establish very specific and demanding criteria, performance against which is required to earn for my child the approbation which is evidence of my care and support. If I am such a parent, I may be so occupied with the establishment of formal methods and goals of production for my child that I fail in the job of teaching the funda-

mental skills requisite to any sort of adequate performance. In the functions of ministerial operation I will be concerned with the production of some sort of 'religious product,' and will be inclined to see inter-personal relationships, personal spirituality and program development all in such terms. I will judge myself and others on the basis of rather rigid 'institutional' standards, and both they and I will seldom achieve very high marks. Because my expectations have been severely delimited by exclusionary definitions, they will also have been set impossibly high.

It becomes more and more difficult with this succession of paragraphs to continue the demonstration I have begun in the first person singular. The process of recollection necessary to set these things forth, and the consequent insight into the details of my own life, especially those specifically having to do with family and 'Church,' brings with it more than a little residual guilt for things done and left undone in the past. The wellsprings of that experience of guilt are clear enough to me on both the basis of theory and relatively clear memory. The question which now arises has to do with whether or not the grip of guilt is strong enough to tip the scales towards that unfavorable ratio between 'generativity' and 'stagnation' that would prevent my effective and productive performance either as father or parish practitioner. It is possible, I think, to support the contention that real

guilt, accompanied by insight and the courage to own it, can become transmuted into the positive energy required for true 'generative' behavior and relationships. To the extent that insight is refused or occluded, however, even real guilt opens the forgotten fund of rage which was and remains the accompaniment of infantile guilt. The effect of this sort of guilt--rage in my parental relationships may make of me a self-righteous moralist in the treatment of my child, forbidding the free exercise of initiative in the child's process of development. 'Stagnation' thus communicates itself. Or worse, it may make of me a kind of seducer, subtly urging my child to the kinds of behavior which might be deserving of the guilt I feel and of which I am so anxious to be rid, seeking by means of projection to accomplish that which suppression has failed adequately to do. Becoming the source of a destructively cruel super-ego is certainly bad enough, but contributing to the development of an amoral sociopath, to my mind, is even worse. Under the guise of non-judgmental acceptance, what I may do to my child I may also accomplish in the performance of certain of the facets of ministerial operation for many others. Or, I may build a very successful 'ministry' based on the manipulation and even the creation of guilt in the people around me. Even while I theoretically understand my vocation to be an instrument and transmitter of growth-producing forgiveness, I may busy myself with the cultivation of that which

requires my 'ministry.' This sort of circular, basically future-less behavior-in-relationship is, I think, one of the definitive instances of 'stagnation.' Playing a game with the guilt-forgiveness axis effectively removes all sense of direction and purpose from the lives of those who are engaged in it.

I have been discussing the polarities of 'generativity' and 'stagnation' as though they were conceptual opposites. In their various manifestations, such a description is most frequently accurate enough. There are situations, however, in which 'stagnation' is better described as an excess of 'care,' which is the very virtue Erikson postulates as definitive of 'generativity.' The half-serious joke about the question raised by the practice of too-early toilet training ('who is being trained, the child or the parent?'), finds the source of its comedy in the way in which it handles reality. The question, together with its implied answer, certainly does speak to a real situation, but the speaking is a distortion, of sorts, of the reality it reports. The complementary fact, which rounds out the view of what is real, is that the child as well as the parent is being trained. It is not, of course, sphincter control by muscles not yet adequate to their purpose which is being taught. What the child is learning is a quality of dependency based upon the very real doubt of one's own ability to perform. The quality of 'care' that is being evidenced at

such a child's very early age is the one which will later be experienced as 'over-protection.' To the extent that I 'care' for my child with such pressing intensity that I deprive that child of any opportunity or necessity for basic decision-making, I have created a real ground for self-doubt as I arrogate to myself what otherwise might have been autonomous decisions of one kind or another. In the parish setting, the urgent desire of some persons to resign all or a part of their autonomy in exchange for certain guarantees of 'certainty' presents a prevalent temptation to 'care' for them in a manner directly opposed to the intention of 'generativity.' The true resolution of doubt is simply not purchasable at the price of personal autonomy, freedom of choice and consequent responsibility. The converse, however, remains true: a certain residuum of doubt is the necessary price of any effective autonomy. As much as one who 'cares' would like it otherwise, it simply cannot be. Such doubt remains altogether supportable if it is laid over a foundation of the kind of 'basic trust' previously discussed.

Thus far, this chapter may seem to have been devoted to outlining the reasons why attention should be paid to the quality of mental health of the parish practitioner. In a way, of course, this is true, but there are at least two other points the clarity of which the preceding paragraphs were designed to elucidate. In the first place, I have intended to show that that with which the parish practitioner

has to do is human life as it in fact develops. To this end I have pushed an analogy between family and 'Church' perhaps rather further than is altogether safe. I make no apologies for the accuracy of the analogy, you understand, but only its safety. In the second place, of course, I have wanted to lay the foundation for the justification of the inclusion of this material in a project such as this. That is, I have hoped to indicate that the process of human growth is the appropriate arena for soteriological operation. The reason for looking at human development at all, at least in this context, is to find where and how the questions about 'salvation' and 'sanctification' may be answered. There has been all along the presumption that human growth has something to do with meaning and purpose. That statement I offer as part of the description of what Erikson called 'basic trust' as it operates in my life-in-relationship.

RITUALIZATION IN HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

I now want to proceed to a discussion of Erikson's description of the role of ritualization in human development for the purpose of expounding the foundation thus far laid in the direction of discovering certain connections between the development of the human person-in-community, on the one hand, and the coming-to-be of 'Church' in the operation of the communicative symbol-complex of sacramental

system on the other.⁹

The dialectical form of description in which Erikson couches all of his synthetic formulations appears in his discussion of ritualization and psycho-social human development in the postulation of the pole of 'pseudo-speciation,' on the one hand, and that of 'shared vision,' on the other. Pseudo-speciation, the phylogenetic phenomenon which is a byproduct of 'real' human evolution, is the tendency to build "a superstructure of tribal, national, and religious divisions, each dominated by a world view ascribing to itself some unique unquestionable superiority as 'the people' and thus assigning an inferior status to all non-people."¹⁰ The mechanism by which pseudo-speciation is achieved is the "shared vision" which is the content of the group's world view. The achievement of a shared vision Erikson postulates (on the basis of accumulated clinical observation) to be a "basic human need."¹¹ Erikson turns prophet when he suggests that the emergence of the verifiable new facts which constitute the supra-national and supra-cultural technology

⁹As references will indicate, I rely heavily on Erik H. Erikson, Toys and Reasons (New York: Norton, 1977). See also Erik H. Erikson, "Life Cycle and Ritualization," in Donald R. Cutler (ed.) The Religious Situation: 1968, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1968), pp. 711 ff.

¹⁰Erikson, Toys and Reasons, p. 60.

¹¹Ibid., p. 26.

provokes the search for a cosmological order, a "more inclusive sense of reality," which can issue in a shared vision that transcends the limits imposed by pseudo-speciation.¹² This is rather more than the political notion of 'one world,' but it is certainly inclusive of it. In order for this to occur, it will require a "re-ritualization" of those facets of everyday life the earlier ritualization of which led to the 'stagnation' of the powers of those whose function it would be to engage in the building of a new and more inclusive shared vision.¹³

On the basis of this overview then, we will proceed to examine the ontogenetic scheme of the "ritualization of everyday life." The accomplishments of ritualization are numerous, in the aggregate providing "a major link between the ego's propensity for orientation in space and time and the world view dominating (or competing in) a society."¹⁴ Erikson enumerates seven specifics:¹⁵

1. The satisfaction of basic human needs are placed in a communal context, thus joining the still vulnerable ego to the group's view of its corporate place in the natural and spiritual universe.

¹²Ibid., p. 61.

¹³Ibid., pp. 167 ff.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 83

¹⁵Ibid., pp. 82 f.

2. The infantile sense of omnipotence is transformed into a joint sense of manifest destiny, through the learning of sanctioned ways of doing daily things.
3. Feelings of guilt are deflected onto outsiders who are excluded from knowing "the right way."
4. Emerging cognitive patterns are placed in the service of the community's shared vision.
5. The various components of adult ritual are successively developed in each stage of ritualization.
6. The functions of basic societal institutions are experientially developed.
7. The psycho-social foundation is laid upon which individual identity is developed, eventually to be confirmed in adolescence. Concomitantly, the personal constituents of identity are integrated into a world-view and belief system.

Eriksons's examination of ritualization results in an overlay on his familiar schematic description of the human life cycle. In at least one vitally important particular, it also contributes a corrective amendment to his previous work. He feels he has hitherto under-estimated the danger of 'stagnation' in the adult phase he calls 'generative.' Since the generative adult is the ritualizer for the children

of society, a breakdown at this point means a distortion imposed throughout the entire cycle, both individually and socially.¹⁶

- I. Infancy: The Oral-Sensory Stage. Here, the symbols are "the light, the face and the name." The procedures of greeting, grooming and feeding the new-born leads to a mutuality of recognition: both the child and the mother are named, and the face of the mother becomes recognized as the source of all need-fulfillment. At the same time, the infant is exposed, in the same elements which compose the emerging ritualization, to a series of estrangements issuing in a sense of separation and abandonment which, because it is never quite overcome, requires repeated periodic reassurance. For this reason the ritual element of the stage, "The Numinous," becomes pervasive throughout subsequent ritualizations, and in all adult rituals. The numinous is particularly the province of organized religion, and organized religion owes its social origin and basis to this connection. The "ritualism," which is the destructive distortion of the ritual

¹⁶Ibid., p. 59.

element of the stage, is Idolism, defined as adulation as opposed to adoration. It is an excess of libindinal narcissism invested in an objectification.

- II. Childhood: The Muscular-Anal Stage. Erikson discovers for this stage the symbols "the word and the law." Through the means of discovery of control, and the regularization thereof, of the eliminative process, and through the increased control of locomotion, there emerges a sense of personal autonomy. The same processes also develop a severe discrimination between the sanctioned and the out-of-bounds. The learning, simply stated, is that of how to adjust our will to the wills of those who judge us. The newly-acquired ability to stand upright brings with it the threat of being judged--even from behind! The interiorization of this process describes the genesis of the "super-ego." During the ritualization of the stage, word meanings begin to develop. "Yes" and "no" become the symbols for judgment. This period is the ontological origin of both the "divided self" and of the process of pseudo-speciation. For the individual, there begins to emerge the sense of negative identity: what

one might be, but mustn't be. The ritual element of this stage is "The Judicious," which later becomes enshrined socially in the courts and related institutions. The danger of ritualism is the tendency to "emphasize the obsessively formalistic and bureaucratic over the convincingly ceremonial."¹⁷ The result is fearful compulsion rather than full assent to what is 'right.' We can call the ritualism Legalism, the victory of the letter over the spirit of the law.

III. Play-age: The Locomotor-Genital Stage. In this period, Erikson's symbols are "the act and the image." Here we find the ontological origin of psychosocial initiative. The ability now exists to relive (and correct) the past, through acting it out, and so also to anticipate the future. A sense of guilt is a concomitant of the self-comparison against the newly emergent ego-ideal. It can be responded to by the acting-out of heroes and villains. The ritual element contributed by this stage is, of course, "The Dramatic." The dangers here are the repression of thought and inhibition of

¹⁷Ibid., p. 97.

initiative which are the products of excessive guilt. The ritualism which can distort the ritualizing patterns of the stage is that of Impersonation, which is the denial of authenticity, either from within the self, or imposed from outside. The adult social institution corresponding to the stage might be the theatre, or more probably, the performing arts at large.

- IV. School Age: The 'Latency' Stage. Erikson's symbols are "the method and the scope." The teaching and learning of the use of available materials to create new forms provides the context of ritualization, which now becomes truly cooperative for the first time in the activities of the school-room and situations of team-play. The necessary organization of space and time provides form: thus, "The Formal" is the emergent ritual element of the stage. For the individual, the threat is that of inferiority, which is the product of not being able to live up to the demands of physical performance and mental discipline required for the basic techniques taught. Formalism is the distortion, or ritualism. It is that over-formalization and perfectionism that tends to the pretense that

works make the person and the technique the truth. The social institutionalization of the ritualization of the stage would appear to be 'business,' or the conglomerate of productive and distributive industry, in our society.

- V. The Adolescence Stage and Beyond.¹⁸ Here the symbols are "the self and the truth." This is the stage of concretizing personal identity, and of an emerging readiness for the ideological style which pervades the ritualizations of a particular culture. Here also emerges the affiliate element, intimacy. Ritualizations range from those of dating practices to identification with the shared narcissism and elitism of exclusive groups, and issue in the 'second birth' ceremonies of graduation and new beginnings. "The Ideological" is the ritual element which finds its origin in this developmental stage. The ritualism of the stage is Totalism, a "frantic and exclusive preoccupation with what seems unquestionably ideal within a tight system of ideas."¹⁹

¹⁸Note that in this "stage" Erikson compresses two periods which in earlier versions of the scheme have separate identities: "The Adolescent" and "The Young Adult."

¹⁹Erikson, Toys and Reasons, p. 111.

Here, also, are reintroduced the threats of earlier stages, narcissism and idol-building. Institutionalized ideology, government and the military, would be logical candidates for the institutions rooted in this stage of development, at least in our society.

VI. Adulthood: The Generative Stage. At this stage, all the ritualizations of the previous stages are constructed into grand rituals, which give sanction to the lesser ritualizations by which the new generation is to be socialized. The rituals of graduation from the apprenticeship of youth issue in marriage ceremonies, which 'give license' to enter into those new associations which will transmit a way of life to a coming generation. For persons in this group, a real need is to be sanctioned in the role of ritualizer. The adult element in ritual is what we might call "The Generational," which includes the auxiliary ritualizations of "the parental, the didactive, the productive and the curative."²⁰ Authoritism, or the spurious usurpation of authority, is the ritualism of the stage. The threat of

²⁰Ibid., p. 111.

stagnation, which would interfere with re-ritualization of those development ritualizations that have become personally destructive and societally counter-productive, is seen to be more important than Erikson himself first thought.²¹ The institution which seems to reflect the ritualization of the stage might be Family, but it might also be true that Medicine, Education, and the Plastic Arts are also legitimately to be viewed as institutional expressions of the element of the generative in ritual.

VII. Old Age. There, the ritual component is "The Integral," that which welds together and makes sense of disparate elements. The ritualism Erikson identifies as Sapientism, or the unwise pretense of being wise. Perhaps the only 'institution' which can be said to reflect the element of the integral is society, itself.

The summary rituals of adult life, which preserve the elements of the ritualizations of the ontogenetic stages, are among the means of ritualizing the development of the

²¹See above n.16. The point cannot be overemphasized. Perhaps Browning (Generative Man) might also wish to examine the implications of this newer emphasis.

next generation of individuals. The social institutions, which owe their own genesis to the processes of individual ritualization, become preservers and transmitters of the ritual elements from which they come to exist. But the rituals to be found in these institutions will contain elements from each of the stages, either as positive constituents, or as negative, ritualistic distortions. The rituals of the Church, and more especially, those which are formalized as 'sacraments,' are potentially valuable as constituents of the process of psychosocial development. The realization of this potentiality is dependent upon the assiduous avoidance of 'ritualism,' and the degree of understanding of developmental needs possessed by the 'ritualizers.'

Chapter IV

SACRAMENTAL SYSTEM AS CONTEXT FOR PASTORAL PRAXIS

REALITY AND RELATIONSHIP

By way of introduction to this ultimate chapter it is perhaps advisable to expand upon and present with a bit more organization and consistency some of the concepts I have already used or implied in my understanding of the nature of the becoming of 'Church.'¹ That the church should be viewed as organism, rather than mechanism, is a point already sufficiently belabored. That the description of its organic operation should be inclusive enough to encompass a variety of models--"institution" as well as "community," "body" as well as "society," "family" as well as "person"--is a necessary corollary of this view. From my own standpoint, the necessity has to do with my inability to define 'Church' without also including in the definition my own life-in-process and the variety of experiences which are constitutive of it. The church, therefore "is" many of the things which are integral parts of my own self-understanding. The church at one time and another "is" each of the models enumerated, and a good many more besides, because

¹For a consistent "process" view, and one which has been very helpful to me, see Bernard Lee, The Becoming of the Church (New York: Paulist Press, 1974).

each model names a quality of my relationship in and with 'Church' as I actually experience it. Quite apart from the various models, there are a number of qualities of my self-understanding which also apply to my experience of 'Church.'

I experience myself as 'person-in-community,' and as both cause and result of that experience I have a commitment to relatedness as a part of the very fabric of reality.²

The dynamic nature of relatedness as I experience it makes me view the human self as reciprocal. It is not only that one's coming-to-be is discoverable only within the terms of relationship, but rather that all coming-to-be is seen as inextricably mutually inter-related. Experience is reciprocity. My self-understanding, then, is unnecessarily social, contextual, developmental and reciprocal.³ I would

²A basic presupposition of modernity generally is the inter-relatedness of all phenomena. The philosophical efforts at systematization of this view, of course, includes Whitehead, but also the mainstream of American pragmatism and radical empiricism. See especially John Dewey, On Experience, Nature and Freedom (New York: Liberal Arts Press, 1960); John Dewey, The Quest for Certainty (New York: Minton Balch, 1929); William James, The Writings of William James (New York: Random House, 1967); Alfred North Whitehead, Process and Reality (New York: Free Press, 1969)

³The American philosophical scene (pragmatism, radical empiricism) has proven to be especially congenial to the emergence of a variety of approaches to developmentalism in psychology, both individual and social, which have contributed to the 'revisionist' attitude. See especially: George Herbert Mead, Mind, Self and Society from the Standpoint of a Social Behaviorist (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1934)

I would say 'processive,' but that word has assumed certain technical over-tones in theological discourse which I would wish to avoid.⁴ Simply because I see myself in these terms, I also see the church in them. Obviously, this raises certain practical questions regarding, for instance, 'authority' and 'structure.' Obviously, a rigidly hierarchial view of structure cannot be reconciled with such a self-understanding, but an organic and functional view is required by it. Authority, too, can be seen as that which involves the self in reciprocity, rather than that which stands over-against it, or 'above' it. In this view, the church structure can be seen as a metaphor for organic human wholeness, and a Bishop might be understood as a metaphor for that creativity and self-directedness which are proper qualities of the entire organic structure, as well as of each of its reciprocating constituents. To be sure, these 'metaphors' or verbalized symbol-complexes, are the realities they portray insofar as they, in fact, live the life their respective names proclaim to be theirs. There is a further radical corollary of the self-understanding advanced as pre-supposition here and applied by extension to 'Church.' That is, the self is distinctly and unavoidably historical.⁵ It is

⁴The word has been preempted by the followers of Alfred North Whitehead. Actually, the tradition is much broader. Whitehead himself, of course, preferred "philosophy of organism."

⁵Among contemporary theologians, no one presents a better grasp of the historical nature of reality than Pannen-

possible, and at least for some, required to hold a teleological view of the self as 'that which may become,' or even 'that which shall become,' but the becoming itself is discernible only in its relatedness to all other becoming.⁶ What is finally at issue is the question of the value and validity of historicity in the nature of experience as shared. My self-understanding not only includes, but is largely defined by the recognition that my own experience is always participatory. I cannot accommodate to any understanding which allows a radical separation between subject and object,⁷ consequently for me there is no experience which is not shared experience. Granted, that the means of expression available to me are productive of 'over-statement,' nevertheless the basis of the understanding of reality inherited by me and my generation has been so productive of confusion and misunderstanding, not to mention human misery and environmental destruction, that it requires the application of a rather heavy-handed antidote. I suppose no

berg, see especially Wolfhart Pannenberg, Theology and the Philosophy of Science (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1976)

⁶This is particularly the contribution of the "theologians of hope": see Jürgen Moltmann, Theology of Hope (New York: Harper & Row, 1967), a contribution 'process' theologians have yet to accommodate very convincingly.

⁷With an intuition that is once again beginning to be appreciated, Schleiermacher grasped the idea of the identification of subject and object as the pre-requisite for perception. See Friederick Schleiermacher, On Religion (New York: Harper & Row, 1958), pp. 246-251.

generation prior to my own has had more reason to understand the radical meaning of 'the historical.' At the same time, and for the same reasons, no generation has had more reason to deny the reality and meaning of history. There are two common ways to handle such realities as Auschwitz and Hiroshima: either they are all that matters, and therefore nothing matters; or they matter not at all, and therefore nothing matters. One can subscribe to "Existentialist atheism," or, one can adopt a supernaturalist view, perhaps in a neo-pentecostalist guise. These are not the only options, but they reflect the range rather well, I think. My self-understanding, however, leads me to an alternative view altogether outside the range described. I need not see myself as either the victim of events outside myself, or as belonging ultimately to a reality quite outside, and superior to, the meaning of exterior events. My own life is not rendered meaningless by Hiroshima, nor is Hiroshima made meaningless by my participation in a 'reality' which is protected by being called transcendent.⁸ So also 'Church.' It is intimately and intricately interconnected in reciprocal

⁸The distortion of Kantian thinking, which maintains that there is a 'noumenal' self which is unscared by exposure to the 'phenomenal' world, is unfortunately still very common. Though it betrays a basic rejection of the meaning of the Incarnation, it nevertheless finds safe lodging in much popular devotional matter that purports to be Christian. Unfortunately, a tendency in this direction is discernable in some who work in the tradition of 'transcendental Thomism.' Rahner himself skates close I sometimes think.

relationship with all of becoming, with all of historical actuality.

The self-understanding which has emerged for me is, by definition, a recognition of responsibility, for me as for 'Church.' The discovery of myself from within the dynamics of shared experience, of the response of self to event and event to self, means that the category of the historical becomes central to both analysis and practice for me.⁹ I think it must be seen as equally central to the becoming of 'Church.' It is difficult, by the way, for me to conceive of an examined and criticized self-understanding very different from mine emerging from a parish practice which includes any effort to integrate the pre-suppositions of the human sciences into the generally accepted appropriate functions of such a practice. It is equally difficult for me to see how one might prevent the extension of the details of such a self-understanding to an understanding of the 'Church.' It is not that I particularly wish to prescribe such a self-understanding or definition, but rather that I wish to repeat that I find it virtually unavoidable, given the attempt at integration.

⁹cf. H. Richard Niebuhr, The Responsible Self (New York: Harper & Row, 1963).

A SEARCH FOR CONTEXT

For me, the most important facet of the emergence of the self-understanding, the extension of its terms to the definition of 'Church,' and the method which is both the cause and product of it, has been the effort clearly to define the context in which the pastoral task takes place. Certainly, I am not alone in such an effort. Don S. Browning examines a problem many of us have faced.¹⁰ Perhaps we have sought far and wide for educational or counseling methods which are more frankly "Christian," or, at least, "religious," in their terms of presentation. Thus Jung, for example, is discovered and re-discovered at the parish level as a kind of antidote to those clinicians whose findings are presented in what seem more naturalistic or materialistic terms. Or, we grasp at some new theory or therapy which seems to bear some analogy to a favorite understanding of a favorite theological concept. These are the devices to which we are easily led by the approach which sees practice as applied systematics. In the end, it appears that we are actually looking to the theorists and practitioners of the secular disciplines to provide our 'context' for us.

Browning's suggested solution is to establish the practice of a very positive kind of practical neo-phariseism

¹⁰Don S. Browning, The Moral Context of Pastoral Care (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1976)

as the context for pastoral care. Aside from the difficulties of establishing the means for the kind of 'discourse' he suggests, there is, I believe, the unavoidable danger of the praxis becoming prescriptive in the most rigid and legalistic sense. The benefits of "discourse" (I would prefer 'conversation') are, however, undeniable. First, it points to a language as a principal mode for the symbolization of shared experience.¹¹ Second, it does so from within a community in which "Word" has already long been established as a central symbol. Third, it is itself not only a sharing of experience, but also an experience shared. It is social; it is contextual; at its best, it is also developmental and truly reciprocal. There is no doubt in my mind, as a result both of observations and experience, that "discourse" has a vital, perhaps irreplaceable, value when used adjunctively in the formation and understanding of "context."¹² As the sole or principal method, however, it runs the risk of becoming little more than a forum for the emergence of a barren rationalism, on the one hand, or a rigid fideism, on the other.

It is at least interesting that Browning's proposal itself arises in a milieu in which renewed discussions of

¹¹cf. Edward Spir, Language (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1921)

¹²cf. Bernard Cooke, Ministry to Word and Sacrament (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976), pp. 219-340.

the second Vatican Council,¹³ has begun to touch the theological reflection of those in the mainstream of reformed Christianity. Browning's proposal is, of course, an effort to validate for current use ideas found in classical protestantism, based on a theology of the 'Word.' Fundamentally, that which lies behind Browning's speculative construct, and also behind the work of those working explicitly with 'sacramental theology' is the same interest that has produced the recent spate of Christological works.¹⁴ The availability of the person and salvific work of Jesus, the Christ, is the issue. So is it quite explicitly for the parish practitioner.

¹³See especially: Sacrosanctum Concilium, the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy; Apostolicam actuositatem, the Decree on Lay Apostolate; and Gaudium et spes, the Pastoral Constitution of the Church in the Modern World. All are conveniently gathered in Walter M. Abbot, (ed.) The Documents of Vatican II (New York: Guild, 1966)

¹⁴The additions to the Christological literature in recent years have been many, among which the following are perhaps most influential on the present argument: Walter Kasper, Jesus the Christ (London: Burns and Oates, 1976); Hans Küng, On Being a Christian (New York: Doubleday, 1976). This work is, of course, not exclusively a Christological study. It does, however, spend well over three hundred pages on the person and work of Jesus, and the Christian's relationship to Him. Jürgen Moltmann, The Crucified God (New York: Harper & Row, 1972) Wolfhart Pannenberg, Jesus--God and Man (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1977) Karl Rahner, Theological Investigations (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1961), I, IV, V. Karl Rahner, Foundations of Christian Faith (New York: Seabury Press, 1978) Precisely as the title indicates, this is a work of foundational theology; the Christological sections are extremely important, however. Edward Schillebeeckx, Jesus (New York: Seabury Press, 1979). Superior to both Pannenberg and Kasper, he competes well with Pannenberg in historical erudition, and with Kasper in philosophical skill.

While Browning writes 'practical theology' and Schillebeeckx and Kasper, for instance, are self-consciously engaged in speculative, constructive theology, the outcome of their respective productions remains much the same for the practitioner. Until what people like these have to say has been brought into explicit critical dialogue with the experience of pastoral practice, all of it--whether labeled 'theoretical' or 'practical'--remains basically meaningless. Meaning comes to it as a function of the value it achieves as theoria moves into poesis. Indeed, meaning and value are both facets of the circular dynamic thread which runs through both theoria and poesis, which can be called praxis.¹⁵ An underlying pre-supposition of everything I write is that the genetic key, so to speak, for grasping a constructive understanding of praxis is the Christological key, and more explicitly the soteriological one. This is because, of course, the central aim of pastoral practice is 'salvation.'

I make this last statement in full awareness of the dangers in it, both to the practitioner and to the practice. If I were to begin seeing myself as 'saviour,' or my function as 'saving,' I would find myself in desperate straits as far as my own mental health is concerned, and I would be in a position to do incalculable damage to the people with whom I serve. Nevertheless, both who I am and what I do remain

¹⁵See n. 17, Chapter I.

beyond the possibility of definition until they are both seen in the context of 'salvation.'¹⁶ In an effort to come to definition, then, I begin by defining 'salvation' as 'that which leads towards or contributes to, wholeness, completion, health and maturity, and, more particularly, to human wholeness and maturity.' For the Christian, to say 'whole, complete, well or mature,' is to say, 'Jesus, the Christ.' It is not that He is a model of these qualities, though He is, but rather that He is the reality of these things as they are conceivable potentialities for me, or the cosmos. Insofar as I 'lead toward, or contribute to' these potentialities, it means that I am, together with others, moving towards the Christ. That is the definition of pastoral practice. The question we are examining is that of the context in--and through--which such function occurs. Pastoral practice is, to my mind, cohesive and unitary. That is, it is appropriate to speak of it in the singular as 'function.' Those sub-functions, for which there is such a great temptation to make of them 'specialties,' which comprise pastoral practice, are celebration, proclamation, conversation, spiritual counsel, catechesis, and administration. While I do not mean this list to be exhaustive of possible titles, I do mean it to be inclusive of appropriate sub-functions. I might include 'leadership,' as well,

¹⁶cf. Urban T. Holmes, III, The Future Shape of Ministry (New York: Seabury Press, 1971), esp. pp. 8-32.

but in fact I see this as a quality of function rather than a sub-function.

SACRAMENTAL SYSTEM EXPERIENTIALLY DEFINED

There are a variety of ways of beginning a discussion of sacramental system. Anyone, it seems to me, would be well advised to begin from where one is. The parish practitioner is uniquely in the midst of that which begs for discussion. At this moment, for instance, I am in great turmoil of spirit. I am concerned about the discussion I just had with a fellow priest at lunch, which went to the very heart of self-understanding derivable from, if not intrinsic to, the concept of Order (or is it Orders?). I am concerned, too, about the young couple for whom I will celebrate a nuptial eucharist day after tomorrow. Informed opinion sees between them a deep and genuine relationship, which is at the same time imperiled by external threats and the potential of inter-personal conflict. Or, there is the wife of the man for whom the burial office will be read the same day. After ten years of self-sacrificing love given in the care of a victim of Parkinson's disease, she has no trouble in seeing 'resurrection' for her husband, but feels only an emptiness and meaninglessness for herself. But most of all, I am concerned about my son-in-law, my daughter, and my grandson. The breadwinner of this young family is suddenly threatened by a disabling, possibly fatal

disease. I am, of course, greatly tempted to speak of 'sacramental system' first of all from the point of view of what it means--really means--to these people and to me. Instead, I will choose to begin from a more general situation, and one which is continuing and current for many of my fellow practitioners. Nevertheless, that beginning, and what may develop from it, is also colored unavoidably by these--and other--more immediate and pressing pastoral experiences. Be that as it may, on Sunday next our parish will celebrate the sacrament of Christian initiation for two young people. This, too, is real; it is where I will begin.

The continuing controversy, and attendant development of a pastoral crisis in the Episcopal Church concerning the theology of Christian initiation, does indeed provide an appropriate focus for beginning an examination of sacramental system as the context for pastoral care.¹⁷ The relationship of sacrament, in its liturgical and cultic

¹⁷See especially: Geoffrey W. H. Lampe, The Seal of the Spirit (London: Longmans, Green, 1951); Lionel S. Thornton, Confirmation (London, Dacre Press, 1954); Karl Rahner, Confirmation Today (New York: Seabury Press, 1975); Hugh M. Riley, Christian Initiation (New York: Consortium, 1974); Hugh M. Riley, Made Not Born (Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press, 1976); J. Robert Wright, "Response: Prayer Book Studies 26: Considered Objections," Anglican Theological Review, LVII (January, 1975), 60-71; Urban T. Holmes, II, "Confirmation as a Rite of Intensification: A Response to J. Robert Wright," Anglican Theological Review, LVII (January, 1975), 72-78; Marion J. Hatchett, "The Rite of Confirmation in the Book of Common Prayer and in Authorized Services 1973," Anglican Theological Review, LVI (July 1974), 292-310.

functions, to the development of the life of the individual-in-community, and to the constitution of community itself, is in more than one sense directly dependent upon the genetic origin of the entire complex of sacramental action in the sacrament of initiation. In one way, the convenantal relationship which is irreversibly begun in baptism is, in its ecclesial manifestation, sacramental system. That is to say, the system is itself the historicized enfleshment of the Paschal Mystery, which is both the proclamation of the possibility of human wholeness and human maturity, and the means of the realization for the individual-in-community of those potentialities. Each liturgical or cultic symbol-complex which may in any way appropriately be described as 'sacramental,' or denominated 'sacrament,' is in some manner a re-presentation of Paschal Mystery in a mode available to the prehension and participation of specific individuals-in-community.¹⁸ Each is also, and at the same time, constitutive of community as the historically and culturally relativized enfleshment of Paschal Mystery. The efforts toward liturgical reform of the past generation, aimed principally at a clarification of the implications of the first part of this equation, have occasioned a great deal of turmoil as those efforts have raised questions of institutional import impinging upon the very foundation of ecclesiology and the

¹⁸ See Lee, The Becoming of the Church, pp. 212-223.

doctrine of ministry.

Parish practitioners are faced with the possession of an instrument which is at the same time both an enormous blessing and a terrible threat. Most of us have grown up in a church where, in spite of protestations to the contrary, private baptism was the norm. Relatively rare instances of public initiations were viewed as curiosities in which the congregation was invited to observe as spectators the enactment of a rite which by nature belonged to the baptizand, the natural family, and those invited to be sponsors. Even those of us who struggled for years to bring at least a plurality of all baptisms to public view, knew full well that most people saw what they witnessed as the basically private prelude to the appropriately public rite of confirmation. The single real exception to this rule, in my own experience, came in the celebration in a very few places of the reconstructed Great Vigil of Easter, in which baptisms are restored to a place central to the entire rite. The validation of this practice, and the promotion of it to a normative place in the liturgy, is at best in germ the most important single feature of the reformed Book of Common Prayer, from a pastoral point of view. It is the foundation on which rests the rite of baptism as it is ordered for enactment at any time, in which the wholeness of initiation is seen to include serially both crismation and eucharist as the immediate concomitants of the administration of water with the trini-

tarian formula.

Baptism previously had become, perforce, a rite of infancy, as confirmation had become a puberty rite, each of them thus achieving a secularized social value of some real importance. The pastoral crisis in which parish practitioners are today involved consists of the need to replace these 'rites of passage,' while protecting the suddenly restored integrity of the sacrament of Christian initiation.¹⁹ The crisis is exacerbated by the growing realization of the universalist implications of the Gospel forced upon our consciousness by the radical pluralism of an emerging world culture. In fact, the new rite of initiation, in spite of tampering by the bishops, speaks to these realities, though it hardly provides in itself all the answers. What it does provide, when properly utilized, is a context in which the requisite hard pastoral work can honestly be done. This is work, however, which can hardly even be begun until one comes to some understanding of the category 'symbol,' its relationship to 'sacrament,' and the implications of these understandings for the meaning, in turn, of 'human,' 'person,' and 'community.' Anything less than a thoroughgoing effort at such a project is bound, in my estimation, to

¹⁹ On the prevalence and nature of rites-of-passage, see David Power and Luis Maldonado (eds.), Liturgy and Human Passage (New York: Seabury Press, 1979) cf. Donald Van Gennep, The Rites of Passage (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960)

lead--in spite of the best of intentions--to a denigration of the use of the symbol-complex to the secularized 'rite-of-passage' previously mentioned, or, worse, to an occasional attention to 'production values' in the ordering of public worship.

It should be noted that there is much to justify the understanding of the various sacraments as 'rites of passage' within a homogenous socio-cultural situation. Baptism and confirmation, for instance, make sense as 'rites of passage' within a society which can appropriately see itself as "Christendom." In such a situation, the condition of universality is given in the terms of the societal self-definition. An attempt to impose such a social definition for the purpose of understanding these rites today, however, is at best sheer fantasy. What was once interpretable as a 'natural' part of primary socialization can be seen so now in only the most perfunctory sort of way. Here lies the crux of the problem presented by those parents who come to the parish practitioner wanting their children "done." What they are asking--and the asking itself has a real human validity and should not be merely discounted--is that their children should 'belong' to something which, in fact, does not exist. Their asking, however, at the very least presents the opportunity for teaching which can convey the invitation to initiation into what does exist. Christian initiation is a symbolization of the potentials of the

human condition at large, and at the same time it is the effective entry into that community which self-consciously involves itself in the highest realization of those potentials.

One begins with the recognition that the 'discovery' and use of symbols, a recognition fortunately already rather fully developed and documented by others, are intrinsic to the very definition of 'human.'²⁰ The coming-to-be of human self-consciousness, no less than of consciousness of the other, involves the manipulation of symbols. There is no intellectually acceptable post-critical epistemology which can hold otherwise. Only a kind of naive materialism, which refuses to contemplate the mechanism of perception and consequent insight, can be free from the need to consider the use of symbols.

The symbol discovery and use of which I speak is, of course, pre-logical, if not altogether pre-rational. Thus, Bernard Lonergan can define a symbol as that "which evokes a feeling or is evoked by a feeling."²¹ This realization, while vitally important to any useful understanding of the use of symbols, provides a most dangerous trap for the

²⁰ See especially: Susanne K. Langer, Philosophy in a New Key (New York: Penguin, 1948); cf. Ernst Cassirer, The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950)

²¹ Bernard J. F. Lonergan, Method in Theology (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972), p. 64.

unwary. Most parish practitioners come to their practice with some sort of rationalized grasp of the symbols with which they will be working. The realization that the symbols, when they are effective, seem to contain far more than that which is conveyable in expressed rational thought, can frequently lead to excesses of anti-rationalism in the search for a recapturable ecstatic experience. While the intuition that feelings somehow run beyond the logical and rational is certainly correct, it is just as certain that they are not altogether void of cognitive content. There remains, however, the impression on the part of many that they are, and, to add absurdity to innocence, that they are therefore somehow superior to whatever does have cognitive content.²² Certainly, the ability to express a feeling is dependent upon some sort of symbolization, by gesture or through image or language. The fact that this sort of 'symbolic transformation' is not only possible, but seems in fact to be requisite, reveals the cognitive content of the feeling, which is that which is available for transformation. A human feeling is vastly more complex than a simple biological reaction. It has to do not only with the stimulus to which it is a response, but also and equally to the whole universe of 'what, then,' to all of the potentiali-

²²See the scathing comments about the potential practice as a result of such thinking in Urban T. Holmes, III, Future Shape of Ministry, p. 176.

ties toward which it points. While there is the danger of reductionism in any effort to explain a feeling rationally, there is also a danger in the willful failure to discern the role of cognitive processes in the articulation of the feeling. One of the inescapable facets of being human is to be caught in the stress of these two dangers. Almost any sentence, for instance, that begins with the words "I am," or "I believe," or "I feel," is partly revelatory and partly constitutive of this reality. Such sentences have the danger of becoming reifications of the self. Insofar as they are legitimate efforts at communication, however, this does not in fact, occur. If I say that I am angry, for instance, not only in order 'to express' my feeling, but also, in order to achieve understanding of it in myself and/or another, I come-to-be in relationship, rather than making a 'thing' of myself. When, on the other hand, I succumb to the danger, I exhibit a basic mistrust of myself and of my relationships revealed by the effort at stabilization in a given 'status.'

The feeling of basic trust, that human existence is fundamentally worthwhile, remains pre-cognitive only so long as it is not symbolized.²³ But the coming-to-be of human

²³The concept of 'basic trust' as fundamental to human development has been most fully explicated in analytically based psychological terms by Erik H. Erikson, Identity and the Life Cycle (New York: International Universities Press, 1959) See also Erik H. Erikson, Insight and Responsibility (New York: Norton, 1964).

self-consciousness, in the differentiation of self from environment, is precisely the beginning of 'humanness' and the genesis of symbolization. Basic trust and the capacity for symbolizing come into existence as functions one of the other. That which lies at the core of the symbol-complex of Christian initiation, then, is the very reality of human existence itself. The re-presentation of the Paschal Mystery is the symbolic affirmation of the worthwhileness of human life precisely in confrontation with the ultimate absurdity, death. Christian initiation says basic trust, but more than that it is basic trust. The symbolizing is of that which belongs to all human persons universally, thus the intuitive impetus to "go into all the world, baptizing . . ." The victorious confrontation of meaning with meaninglessness is that for which 'religious' consciousness, in whatever form, always seeks. The cross-death-resurrection, is the beginning point of Christianity precisely because it is symbol and metaphor of the coming-to-be of humanity itself. The symbolization of the reality in the rite of Christian initiation is the re-presentation of Paschal Mystery which becomes the same reality as experienced by the community involved in the rite.

The word "God" is in one sense the linguistic symbolization of that which is trusted basically, of that which grounds any perceived or experienced worth in human existence. Basic trust, then, is descriptive of a relation-

ship (with God and with others), which is intrinsic to the process of differentiation of self from environment. One becomes a human person in relationship; relatedness is inextricably part of the self which seeks self-understanding. The self-transcendence which is definitive of humanness is in one sense simply descriptive of the objectification process in which the "I" views the "me" in relational terms.²⁴ Since I cannot describe myself in anything other than the terms of relationships, it follows that when I say "I" or "me," I also say "community." Viewing, describing, defining and discussing, as important as they are as human activities, however, are only the least part of life. The experience of self-in-community is the larger and prior part. For the Christian, "Sacrament" is that which creatively effects this experience. While it is symbol, it is also prior to symbol, for its efficacy is not simply causal, but organically constitutive.

Again, for the Christian, the definitive and normative representation of the potentialities of person-in-community, with God, with self, with others, is Jesus the Christ. In Him the potentialities are so fully and completely realized that community becomes identity in the process of its symbolization. This is at least one way of

²⁴See Mead.

saying what 'perfect man and perfect God' means.²⁵ In parish practice, it is the urgent need of human persons to discover, re-discover and move towards the realization of the fullest potentialities of person-in-community. The search, then, is for the reality of relatedness to that which can be trusted and that which grounds meaning, in and through the salvific presence of Jesus the Christ. The sub-functions of ministerial practice--proclamation, catechesis, spiritual counsel, celebration, administration--insofar as they are exercised so as to legitimate their title, are all appropriately directed towards the experiential realization of that presence. In this sense, ministerial practice is all 'sacramental,' as, indeed, is also the practitioner.²⁶

SALVATION AND SYMBOLIC TRANSFORMATION

The network of relationships in which, and largely for the edification of which, such practice occurs is the community called 'Church.' In a manner analogous to that

²⁵Perhaps the question of "messianic self-consciousness" should be re-examined in these terms. Certainly, the more traditional forms of the question seem beyond answer from data retrievable by current critical methods. See Günther Bornkamm, Jesus of Nazareth (New York: Harper & Row, 1960), pp. 169-79, 226-33; Hans Conzelmann, Jesus (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1973), pp. 36-51; Raymond E. Brown, Jesus: God and Man (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1967), pp. 39-107.

²⁶Urban T. Holmes, III, The Priest in Community (New York: Seabury Press, 1978).

in which Jesus the Christ is discernible as Ur-sacrament of the presence of God, the church comes to be as sacrament of the presence of Christ.²⁷ The metaphor which describes the church as "Body of Christ" is the verbalization of a symbolic transformation which brings into being a historical reality. Further, it is precisely "Christ, and Him crucified," which is the "Body," or historicized embodiment, of which the metaphor speaks. Therefore, the church, understood as coming-to-be in the reciprocity of the relationships of which it is comprised, is Paschal Mystery. The church makes itself come to be present in the rite of Christian initiation, as in every behavior properly called 'sacrament.'

For the purposes of the discussion which this essay is intended to further, the reference to 'sacraments' will be confined to those traditional seven which the various parts of main-line Christianity have either defined and accepted, or defined so as to relegate to some lesser position. Obviously, in view of the notion of sacramentality already developed, this is an altogether arbitrary procedure. There is, however, a kind of symbolism, verging perhaps on the 'sacramental,' about these seven and their inter-relationship which has been pointed out by some modern sacramentalists. In total, they point to the "plenitude of

²⁷ Edward Shillebeeckx, Christ the Sacrament of the Encounter with God (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1963).

particularities" of the historical event which is the person and work of Jesus the Christ.²⁸

I have chosen to break into the circle of seven through some consideration of the sacrament of initiation because of specific problems raised in the experience of this sacrament by myself and those with whom I serve. There is expressed here no desire to quarrel with the frequently expressed, and even more frequently experienced 'centrality of the Eucharist' to sacramental system. The experience is real, and utterly undeniable for those who, like me, feel it and report it. There is, however, a danger, not in the experience, but in the reporting of it, which should be carefully noted. It is, in fact, the experience of the Paschal Mystery, of meaning at the edge of meaninglessness, of worthwhileness at the brink of absurdity, which is central. And this, of course, is precisely what lies at the heart of any symbol-complex any Christian would wish to call 'sacrament.' This is not unique to Eucharist.

To say this does not exhaust the meaning of the experience of centrality. There is something much more ordinary and 'everyday' in the experience, which is the medium by which the reference to basic trust is felt. It is this quality, I think, which lies behind the notion that the Eucharist is somehow 'more central' than other

²⁸Jacques Dournes, "Why Are There Seven Sacraments?" in The Sacrament in General (New York: Paulist Press, 1968).

symbol-complexes.²⁹ The historical arguments about dominical institutions were ways of paying attention to this quality, as they were also ways of obscuring the real point. The sharing of food has been 'sacramentalized' in virtually every culture because it so obviously has to do with the preserving, sustaining and developing of every living organism. The connectedness of my life with the life of the man Jesus is unavoidably demonstrated in the sharing of that most elemental and 'everyday' need for food. It is the "us" and the "daily bread," made explicit at the close of the canon, which are experienced as 'central' in the Eucharist. A Christian sacrament connects the particularities of my human life with the particularities of the salvific life-death-resurrection of Jesus the Christ. While the specific details of that connectedness may be difficult to discern in, for instance, Holy Orders or Holy Matrimony, they are so obvious as they appear in the Eucharist as to require whole libraries for their erudite explication.³⁰

Contemporary liturgical reform has as one of its evident motivations the effort to restore the explicit

²⁹See Tad W. Guzie, Jesus and the Eucharist (New York: Paulist Press, 1974).

³⁰The continuing need for liturgical reformation, however, reveals the perverse inclination of the church to obscure, in one way or another, what should be so obvious. Ceremonial accretions, infrequent celebrations, infrequent communions, multiplied celebrations: all are evidences of the same tendency.

nature of the 'everyday' connectedness of human life with human life, through the symbol-complexes of the sacraments. This applies to the mode of enactment prescribed by rubrics and emphasized in the language of the respective rituals. It applies, also, to most of what is being written in the field of sacramental theology, both 'practical,' theoretical and historical. One of the evidences in this regard is the effort to link individual sacraments with specific 'life stages' as these are being described by developmental psychologists.³¹ The temptations here are enormous for the parish practitioner who is sometimes given to viewing the sacraments instrumentally. If instrumentalism is very strictly viewed as that which 'contributes to the well-living of human life,' there is no particular danger in seeing the sacraments in their pragmatic light, when such a judgment is made descriptively after the fact.³² When it is made prescriptively, however, it can lead to a serious distortion of the sacraments, and to an equally serious reductionism in the application of the psychological principles involved. While the tendency to 'sacramentalize' important life-moments through some sort of ritualized symbolization seems a universal human phenomenon, and while

³¹See the specific and carefully worked-out warning and argument in Power and Maldonado, Liturgy and Human Passage.

³²See John Dewey, The Quest for Certainty; Eugene Fontinell, Towards a Reconstruction of Religion (Garden City: Doubleday, 1970). This last is a fine use of 'pragmatism' in constructive, foundational theology.

the recovery of the historical roots of the individual sacraments reveals that they generally fit within this pattern of development, nevertheless Christian witness, in whatever thoughtforms expressed, has always maintained that what is symbolized in the sacraments transcends the specific life-moments of the persons involved in them. Thus, the tendency to reduce baptism and confirmation to rites-of-passage exclusively has always been at least intuitively resisted. The reduction of anointing to a death rite, while it persisted in this form in the Roman church for centuries, was never in fact theologically understood in this light. The recovery of unction as a sacrament of healing--in its own way as much a 'lesser baptism' as penance--not only represents a victory for historical scholarship, but also an explicit recognition of the transcendent nature of sacrament generally.³³ Even those sacraments which have been traditionally understood as conferring 'character,' in the sense of 'permanent' status, are beginning practically to reassume their dynamic nature through a recovery in contemporary terms of an understanding of them as representative of that which underlies and transcends the specific life-experiences of those persons with whose lives their celebrations are connected. The emphasis on the relational metaphors in matrimony and orders is at least one of the

³³See William J. Bausch, A New Look at the Sacraments (Notre Dame, IN: Fides-Claretian, 1977), passim, but especially, pp. 152-212.

means by which the recovery is taking place. In each case the metaphor has to do with the relationship between Jesus the Christ and the collective 'other.' It has, therefore, to do with who Jesus is, with his coming-to-be as a person-in-relationship, as well as with my coming-to-be as a person-in-relationship, and with the coming-to-be universally of every person-in-relationship.

Only when the necessarily communal nature of the sacraments has been positively re-affirmed, is it possible to begin to understand how they can operate functionally and instrumentally in the emergence of the context for the pastoral care of individual persons. Certain of the sub-functions of pastoral care, the homiletical and catechetical, for instance, are almost always practiced in an obviously communal setting. While there is always present the intention of 'edifying' the community, nevertheless the growth and development and healing which one principally intends is that of the individual persons-in-relationship who together with preacher or teacher constitute the community. Counseling, whether directive or non-directive, psychologically oriented, or couched in more 'spiritual' terms, is most generally, though not exclusively, practiced on an individual basis.³⁴ Although the emphasis may be quite different

³⁴The recent development of "systems theory" approaches to family, couple and work-group counseling, however, should be noted as an exciting exception. As background to this development, see especially: Kurt Lewin, Field Theory in Social Science (New York: Harper & Row, 1951); Ervin Lazlo, The Systems View of the World (New York: Braziller, 1972).

as to approach, the twin motivations and intentions, directed both to the community and to personal development, are here present as well. Neither these nor any other of the sub-functions of pastoral care are occurring in vacuo. Each of them is organically related to the others, and all of them are related to each other by the on-going sacramental activity within the community. Each of the sub-functions requires the use, and indeed is defined by the use, of the process of symbolization. They are all communicative operations, and largely work by means of linguistic exchange. Whatever the specific origin or the intended end of the vectors created in the variety of communicative processes, their points of intersection reveal the underlying fact of symbolization as integral to the coming-to-be of the human person. Although it is admittedly dangerous to speak of "priority" in the effort to describe organic process, it is nevertheless justifiable, I think, to say that the basic symbol is prior to any effort at either its articulation or its utilization. The potentialities of human 'maturity,' of wholeness and of growth towards wholeness, are discovered in the effort towards articulation and utilization. The underlying symbol is the concrete representation of the realization of these potentialities. Christians denominate that symbol Jesus the Christ. Sacraments are, in turn, its concrete re-presentation.

In parish practice, there soon comes an overwhelming awareness of the impetus which demands that Christology should be done 'from below,' together with an appreciative sense of the justification of the enormous intellectual energy expended in the "new quest for the historical Jesus." Theological reflection begins to appreciate the essential intuition which has always informed much of popular piety. The need is for a real person who can and does meet one in the specific particularities of one's own life, one with whom that conversation which lies beyond mere confrontation can and does take place. The utter seriousness of my own historicity requires that I take the history of the man Jesus with equal seriousness. Valid 'story' and 'myth,' while in a sense transcendent to the historical, nevertheless derive their validity from their being rooted in it. While the terms of discussing this reality may be paradoxical, the solution of the paradox is in the succession of life-moments in which story becomes history. As this is true in the successive realizations of a variety of potentialities in my own life, so it remains true of the life of Jesus.

Insofar as the sacraments are efficacious, they are so in that they correspond to the definition of the coming-to-be of a person-in-community. The sacraments themselves are social and contextual, they are developmental and they are reciprocal. This means, of course, that any truly

adequate definition of ex opere operato would necessarily include the human relationships involved in its understanding of 'thing done.'³⁵ The emphasis would perforce be upon the doing; reification of the sacrament would be avoided in an insistence upon the dynamic. Necessarily, each sacrament, in such a view, would be seen as "developmental," in the sense that its efficacy would be proportional to its relativity to the life-situations of those involved in its celebration. A definition, of course, is always relative, relative to the cultural situation, to the linguistic pattern, to the philosophical pre-suppositions behind the categories in which the definition is formed. I am speaking here, however, of a more fundamental relativity. The sacrament itself is able to 'grow' or 'develop,' so as to be responsive to the needs of those participating in it. Anyone who has instructed very young children in preparation for participation in the Eucharist knows the reality of which I speak. Anyone who has wrestled with questions of conscience about the propriety of baptizing the infant child of a family which is sub-marginal to the life of the community, has at least examined some of the issues involved in the view of sacrament as 'developmental.'

The quality of relatedness which is suggested by the

³⁵ See the pregnant commentary on ex opere operato in Lee, p. 224. Especially to the point is the distinction Lee makes between ex opere operato and ex opere optime operato.

use of the term 'developmental,' is made explicit in the insistence upon the addition of 'reciprocal' to any definition of sacrament. Insofar as the sacrament is efficacious, there is an interchange between the symbol-complex in its coming-to-be and the coming-to-be of the person-in-community which is intimate to the point of identification. Growth occurs, change happens, movement begins or continues towards maturity and wholeness. This growth, change and movement is descriptive of the dynamic of the symbol-complex, as it is also descriptive of the coming-to-be of the person-in-community.

This inter-relatedness of person and sacrament, which we have called 'reciprocity,' is, in itself, a representation of the Ur-sacrament. It is a sacrament of the universal sacrament of the encounter and conversation of God with the world. In this view, the old arguments about the subjectivity versus the objectivity of the sacraments is finally put to rest. Insofar as the sacrament is efficacious in a salvific way in its relationship to the hurt or lack in my life, insofar as it really provides the means or occasion for a turn from 'sin' towards wholeness, it creates means and opportunity for the move towards wholeness of the whole cosmos. Even a modest degree of 'wholeness' should be able to comprehend the implications of the responsibility this reality demands. This is the beginning of Christian 'vocation.' This is the context of 'care.'

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APPENDIX

A SELECTIVE COLLECTION OF ERIKSON'S DEVELOPMENTAL CHARTS

1. Epigenetic Chart
2. Sequence and Development
3. Ontogeny of Ritualization
4. The "Virtues"

1.

VIII MATURITY								EGO INTEGRITY VS. DESPAIR
VII ADULTHOOD							GENERA- TIVITY VS. STAGNATION	
VI YOUNG ADULTHOOD						INTIMACY VS. ISOLATION		
V PUBERTY AND ADOLESCENCE					IDENTITY VS. ROLE CONFUSION			
IV LATENCY				INDUSTRY VS. INFERIORITY				
III LOCOMOTOR- GENITAL			INITIATIVE VS. GUILT					
II MUSCULAR- ANAL		AUTONOMY VS. SHAME, DOUBT						
I ORAL SENSORY	BASIC TRUST VS. MISTRUST							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

Source: Erickson, Erik H., Childhood and Society. New York:
W. W. Norton, 1950, page 273.

2.

VIII								INTEGRITY vs. DESPAIR
VII							GENERA- TIVITY vs. STAGNATION	
VI						INTIMACY vs. ISOLATION		
V	Temporal Perspective vs. Time Confusion	Self- Certainty vs. Self- Consciousness	Role Experi- mentation vs. Role Fixation	Apprentice- ship vs. Work Paralysis	IDENTITY vs. IDENTITY CONFUSION	Sexual Polarization vs. Sexual Confusion	Leader- and Follower-ship vs. Authority Confusion	Ideological Commitment vs. Confusion of Values
IV				INDUSTRY vs. INFER- IORITY	Task Identi- fication vs. Sense of Futility			
III			INITIATIVE vs. GUILT		Anticipation of Role vs. Role Inhibition			
II		AUTONOMY vs. SHAME, DOUBT			Will to Be Controlled vs. Self-Doubt			
I	TRUST vs. MISTRUST				Mutual Recognition vs. Autistic Isolation			
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

Source: Erickson, Erik H., Identity: Youth and Crisis. New York:
W. W. Norton, 1968, page 94.

infancy	mutuality of recognition					
early childhood	↓	discrimination of good and bad				
play age	↓	↓	dramatic elaboration			
school age	↓	↓	↓	rules of performance		
adolescence	↓	↓	↓	↓	solidarity of conviction	
elements in adult rituals	NUMINOUS	JUDICIOUS	DRAMATIC	FORMAL	IDEOLOGICAL	GENERATIONAL SANCTION

Source: Erickson, Erik H., Toys and Reasons, New York:
W. W. Norton, 1977, page 114.

H. OLD AGE							Integrity vs. Despair, Disgust: WISDOM
G. MATURITY						Generativity vs. Self- Absorption: CARE	
F. YOUNG ADULTHOOD					Intimacy vs. Isolation: LOVE		
E. ADOLESCENCE				Identity vs. Identity Confusion: FIDELITY			
D. SCHOOL AGE			Industry vs. Infe- riority COMPETENCE				
C. PLAY AGE		Initiative vs. Guilt: PURPOSE					
B. EARLY CHILDHOOD		Autonomy vs. Shame, Doubt: WILL					
A. INFANCY	Trust vs. Mistrust: HOPE						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Source: Capps, Donald, Pastoral Care. Philadelphia:
Westminster Press, 1979, page 63.